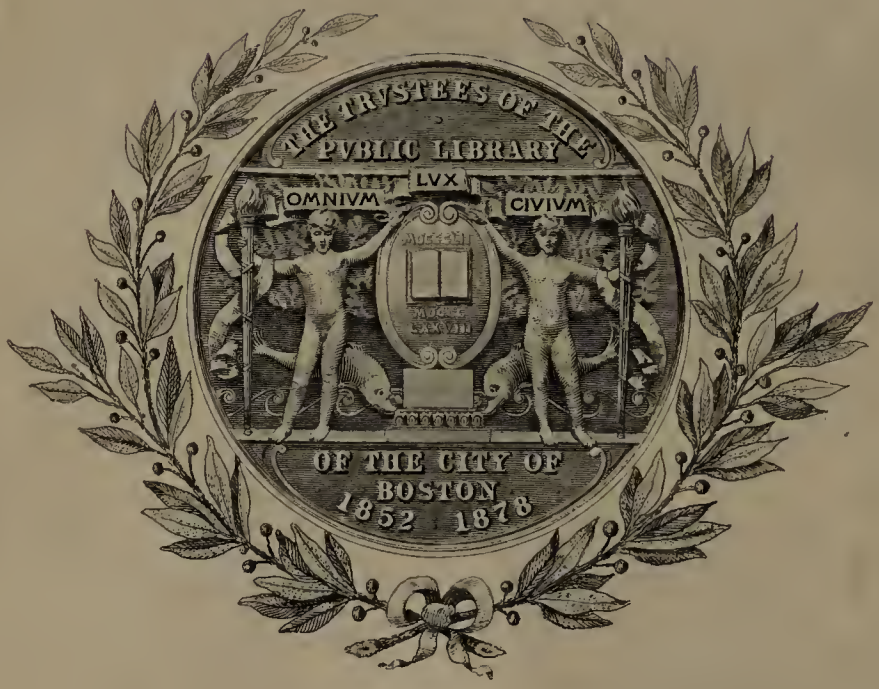
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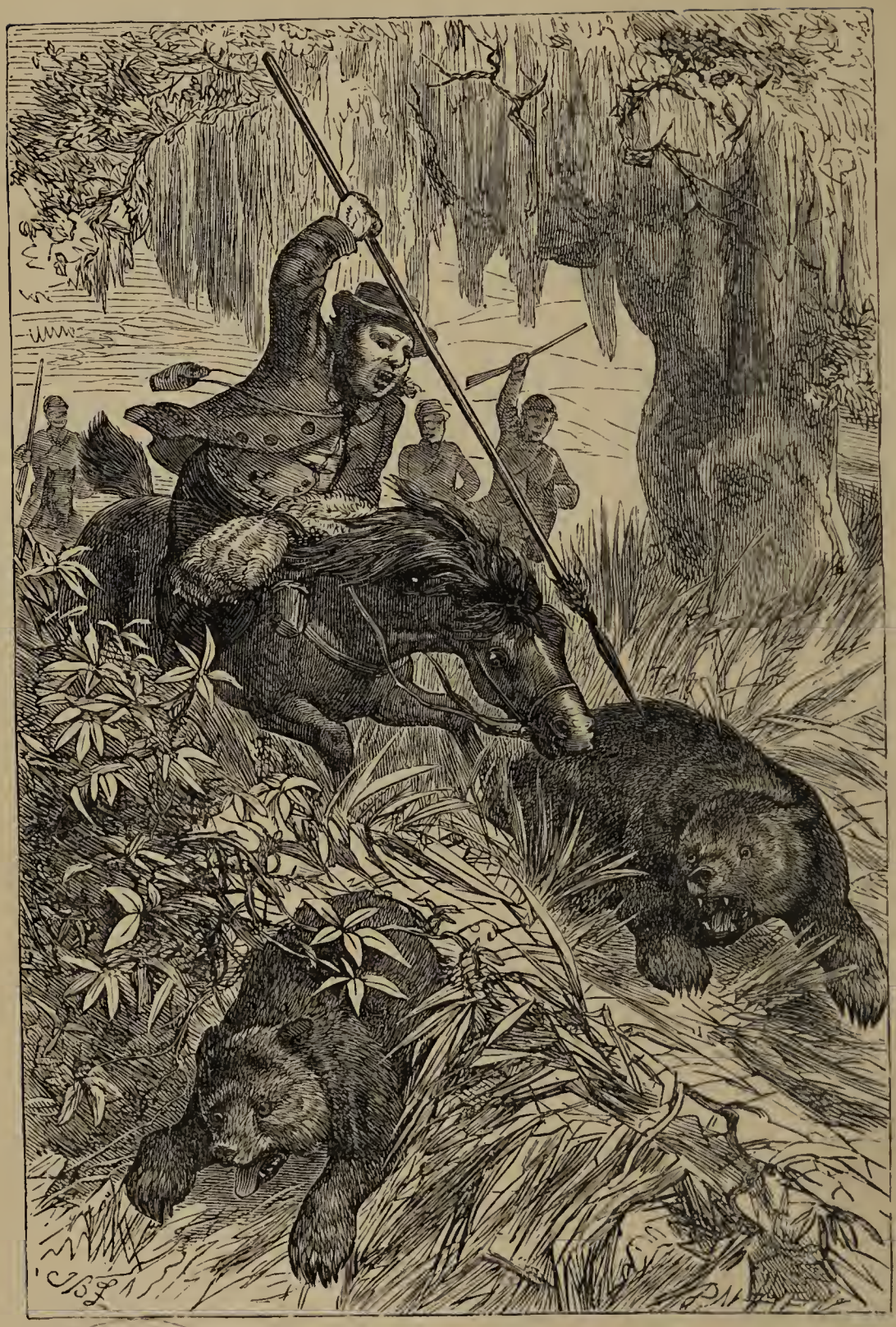


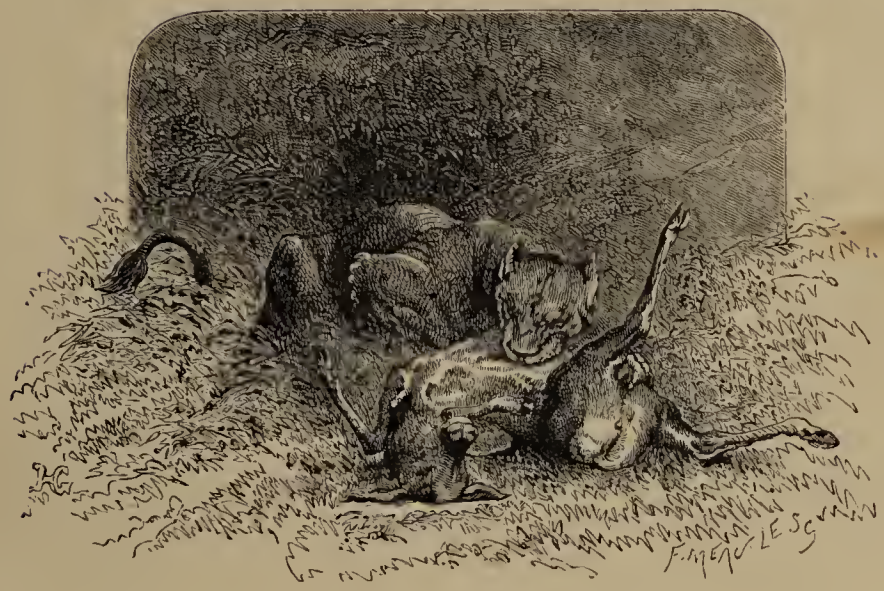
THE DOCTOR'S ADVENTURE.

Page 138.

THE FOREST, THE JUNGLE,

AND

THE PRAIRIE.



A LIONESS AND HER PREY.

Thomas Nelson and Sons,
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

THE FOREST, THE JUNGLE, AND THE PRAIRIE;

OR,

TALES OF ADVENTURE AND ENTERPRISE IN PURSUIT OF WILD ANIMALS.

By

W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

WITH FORTY ENGRAVINGS.

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Preface.

IT can hardly be said that there is, now-a-days, no "royal road to knowledge." For the young student, in every department of science, the path has been cleared of thorns and brambles, and so planted with flowers that it cannot but prove attractive. Hills have been levelled, and ditches filled up, and the traveller proceeds at a rate and with a facility unknown to his predecessors.

In the present volume I have sought to make the road clear towards the acquisition of a knowledge of Natural History. It has been my object to show that behind its apparently formidable scientific details lies a mass of agreeable information; that, apart from the curious interest which attaches to the habits and characteristics of animals, the study of Natural History includes the romance of adventure, heroic daring, and patient courage. While accumulating all needful particulars respecting some of the most formidable Beasts of Prey, I have invited the reader to follow me over many lands in the steps of the hunter and

the trapper—tracking the Tiger among the Indian jungle, rousing the Lion in his African lair, and chasing the Bear in the wide prairies of America or among the forests of Scandinavia.

For these narratives of "hair-breadth 'scapes," of the perils attendant upon encountering or hunting the wild beasts in their native region, I have chiefly consulted the works of recent writers—such as Gordon Cumming, Andersson, Dr. Livingstone, Scoresby, Atkinson, Rice, Winwood Reade, Petherick, Bates, C. F. Hall, Gerstäcker, Lloyd, Kane, Daumas, and Sir J. Emerson Tennent. A few stories of older date have been retained, partly on account of their intrinsic merit, and partly because I would not fail in my allegiance to the old and valued friends of my own boyhood. But the greater portion of the following pages will, I believe, be entirely new to most juvenile readers; and they will serve to impress upon their minds the value of endurance, resolution, patience, and intrepidity. To their indulgent criticism I now submit my labours, trusting they will find in them a store of entertainment for their leisure hours, as well as much valuable information relative to the "habits and customs" of the lords of the Forest, the Jungle, and the Prairie.

Contents.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEAR: HIS HISTORY AND HABITS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FELIDÆ: THEIR HISTORY AND HABITS.

CHAPTER V.

HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO AN END.

List of Illustrations.

THE FOREST, THE JUNGLE, AND THE PRAIRIE.

I.

How these Stories came to be Told.

BLACK MONDAY—RETURNING TO SCHOOL—THE RAILWAY-TRAIN—INVOLUNTARY PRISONERS—WHAT IS TO BE DONE?—THE VIRTUE OF RESIGNATION—HOW TO BEGUILE THE TIME—A JUVENILE POET—NATURAL HISTORY.

BLACK MONDAY is a day to which unthinking youth look forward with considerable apprehension. It is the day on which the long vacation terminates, and school duties are resumed. No more "hours of idleness," no more visits to the picture-gallery or museum, no more pleasant evening parties, round games, and acting charades—no more excursions with fond mammas and pretty cousins, no more donations from liberal uncles or philanthropic grandmothers; but school and its duties again demand their attention. To many lads the prospect is an unpleasing one, and hence they have named the day on which it is revealed to them in all its gloominess—*Black* Monday.

Ah me, a time will come, when they will feel surprised that so gross a misconception could ever have occupied their minds! When they will wish, but in vain, that Black Mondays could return for them, and the quiet, blissful seasons of happy exertion to which they were the prelude! When they will understand that in all a man's career no period is so free from care, anxiety, and sorrow, no period so genuinely happy, as the few years spent in the "groves of Academè!"

Do our readers know Hood's admirable contrast between the Past and the Present—between the schooling at Eton, or Rugby, or Dr. Birch's, and the rough schooling of experience? There will come a time, I say, when they will fully appreciate its truth.

"O little fool!"

the poet exclaims, with emphasis—

"While thou canst be a horse at school,
To wish to be a man!

"Perchance thou deem'st it were a thing
To wear a crown, to be a king!
And sleep on regal down!
Alas! thou know'st not kingly cares;
Far happier is thy head, that wears
That hat without a crown!

"And dost thou think that years acquire
New-added joys? Dost think thy sire
More happy than his son?
That manhood's mirth?—Oh, go thy ways
To Drury Lane, where ..... *plays*,
And see how *forced* our fun!

"Thy taws are brave! thy tops are rare!
Our tops are spun with coils of care,
Our *dumps* are no delight!

The Elgin marbles are but tame;
And 'tis at best a sorry game
To fly the Muse's kite!

"Then be contented. Thou hast got
The most of heaven in thy young lot;
There's sky-blue in thy cup!
Thou'lt find thy manhood all too fast—
Soon come, soon gone! and age at last
A sorry *breaking-up!*"

Wise, therefore, will our young readers be who make the best use of the opportunities afforded by their youth to improve their "shining hours," and convert *Black* Mondays into *Golden* ones!

It was on a certain Black Monday, not very long ago, that a railway-train was labouring along the Elmwood and Firbank branch of a great Yorkshire railway. There was very little traffic at any time on this branch, which had been chiefly constructed at the instigation of a wealthy landowner; and what there was brought no considerable accession of dividend to the company's shareholders. In winter the train dwindled down to the engine and its tender, three or four carriages, and a break-van; and it may have been owing to these circumstances that the carriages were not of a very comfortable character, and the engines in nowise remarkable for a lightning rate of velocity.

Black Monday; yes, and the weather on this particular Black Monday fully justified the epithet attached to the day. It was the third week in January, and snow had been falling incessantly for forty-eight hours. It spread over the wolds and the broad open moors; and it massed in the hollows, and blocked up the roads. It obliterated pathways over otherwise trackless commons; it accumulated in the glens, and threw ramparts across their entrances. White—virgin-white—white with a whiteness which the dweller in

towns can form no idea of, strangely contrasting with the leaden hue of the heavens, it extended far away, far as the eye could reach, like a gigantic shroud folded about the limbs of the frozen earth. The wind came from the hills with a shrill keen cry; the streams had hushed their melody, and seemed fixed in a deadly repose; no birds winged their flight across the dreary waste; no cattle ventured from the shelter of the fold; and the rime stood thickly on the leafless branches of the trees. A bleak, ice-cold, dismal winter-day; for man and animals, as well as schoolboys, a *Black* Monday!

Yes; and the snow lay heavily upon the railway-track, as the engine, slowly pushing its way through the drift, endeavoured to accomplish its accustomed journey.

The last carriage in the train which this iron-horse now dragged along was built in three compartments, but only one of these, the central, was occupied on this particular occasion. And it is with this compartment—out of all the compartments of the train—that we are alone concerned, and only its occupants can have for us any attraction or interest.

They were all schoolboys; schoolboys returning to Dr. Birch's famous academy, Firbank Hall. They lived in a large market-town, about twenty-five miles distant, and had met together, by mutual agreement, on the morning of the day fixed for their return to school, that they might proceed to their destination by the same train, and enjoy each other's company. A merry group they were, and by no means impressed with any sorrowful feelings at the termination of their Christmas holidays; for Dr. Birch was an able master and a thorough gentleman; his sway was not only equitable, but generous; and his pupils both respected and esteemed him.

The tenants of this railway carriage were seven in number; boys, of whom the oldest might be about sixteen or seventeen years of age, and the youngest thirteen; and all, from their appearance and manners, evidently belonging to the upper middle class. Exercising that privilege of clairvoyance which belongs to the story-teller and the poet, we shall peep into the interior of the carriage, and describe these members of the rising generation.

The eldest is Francis Seymour, the *dux* of Dr. Birch's school, a lad of seventeen, bold, earnest, good-tempered; of an athletic figure, handsome countenance, and considerable mental powers. From his partiality to poetry and "capping verses," he is familiarly known as "the poet;" and possessing a retentive memory, he delights to garnish his conversation with frequent poetical quotations. As a story-teller his reputation is great; and when enlarging on a theme in which he feels keenly interested, his eyes glow, his cheek flushes, and his language assumes a certain elevation of tone and warmth of colouring.

Next in order sits Frederick Fisher, second only in ability to Seymour, but of a slower and more laborious disposition. He is popularly supposed to have read every book that ever was written, printed, or published, and his schoolfellows in their moments of difficulty refer to him as to a cyclopædia, a Latin dictionary, and a Greek lexicon. His *forte*, however, is natural history. His collection of birds' eggs is marvellous, and he possesses a treasury of stuffed animals, which to look at is to covet; while at home, in his father's garden, he maintains a small menagerie, more tractable, if less pretentious, than Wombwell's.

Sholto Douglas is a lively youth, of considerable natural talent, and some genuine humour. Edward Vernon shows an aptitude for study and a quickness of observation which

promise him a successful career, when he learns to conquer his desultory habits, and to apply himself more assiduously to some particular branch of knowledge. Versatility is the excellence of genius, but the bane of moderate talents.

Of Alfred Mountjoy we need only say that he is neither bad nor good, clever nor dull; a fair average boy, of ordinary abilities, docile, affectionate, and good-humoured.

Yonder retiring, gentlemanly lad is Walter Beauchamp. His schoolfellows suspect that there is a good deal in him, but he shrinks from general notice, and only reveals his rare powers and abundant stores of information to one or two highly-trusted "cronies." Yet is he an universal favourite; for all boys like gentlemen, and Beauchamp is a thorough gentleman—brave as a lion, generous, self-denying, loyal, and modest.

Last, but not least, of "the Seven"—as they are called at school, from their invariably keeping together, and acknowledging Seymour's leadership in all the school pastimes—last, but not least, is Charley Lambert, whom Seymour has dubbed the Fat Boy, in allusion to a conspicuous character in Dickens's *Pickwick*. His round, broad, good-humoured face—his short legs, so thick and fleshy—and, let us own it, his capacious stomach, justify the unflattering title. He never *walks*, but *rolls* or *waddles*. To ascend a flight of stairs is a punishment, and to climb a hill incredible suffering. Poor Charley! His great solace is to retire to a sequestered angle of the playground, or a quiet nook in the schoolroom, armed with a copy of "Robinson Crusoe," or some other precious book of adventure, and furnished with a lunch of bread and cheese, or a thick slice of plum-cake; that thus, in solitude and serene silence, he may simultaneously refresh both mind and body!

Fast flew the minutes as the iron-horse whisked off this

happy party from holidays to workdays, from pleasure to study. Fast flew the minutes; for each had so much to tell—such happy reminiscences!—of Christmas revels and New Year festivities, of wondrous pantomimes and delightful forfeits, of costly gifts from friends and relatives, of stories told and books read; yes, of all the varied scenes and shadows that sweep across the magic mirror of boyhood! Then each had such curiosities to reveal to the admiring gaze:—a many-bladed knife, a microscope, a couple of handsome volumes, a cricket bat, a fishing-rod, a tool chest, *cum multis aliis*. What marvel that to minds so pleasantly occupied the train seemed hurrying along with portentous swiftness!

Meanwhile, the Fat Boy, who was liberally provided with an immense parcel of ham sandwiches—Seymour appraised their burthen at a hundredweight and a half, and inquired if he had paid the railway officials for his excess of luggage—after distributing a supply among his schoolfellows, threw himself back in a comfortable corner, and proceeded to demolish his delicacies. He ate, he digested, and he mused. Suddenly he started from his semi-somnolent condition: "I can't make it out, Seymour," he cried; "I have been looking ever so long at the thorn tree yonder, and it either moves as we move—which can't be, you know—or we stand still; or—there, I don't know what! All I can say is, I have seen that one tree ever so many minutes! Why, this is my sixth sandwich, and I first saw it when I began my second!"

"What's that you say, young Lambert?" cried Seymour; "let me see. I declare you are right. The train must have stopped, for we don't pass the tree, that's certain. What's up, I wonder? Are both doors locked? No; this one is not. We'll soon see, then, if anything has happened."

As he spoke he opened the door, and partially swung himself out.

"Eh, look here!"

"Why, what's the row, Seymour?" cried his companions.

"Well, talk about pantomimes and transformations; I should like to know if any harlequin that ever lived accomplished such a bit of business as this. Why, boys, the train has left us behind! Here we are, all alone—no engine, nc guard, no break-van, no other carriages!"

"What's to be done, Seymour?" said Fisher, after he had convinced himself that his *dux* was not playing off a joke; "if we stay here, we shall be smashed to atoms by some other train."

"No; of that there is no fear," replied Seymour. "I know there is not another down-train until seven or eight o'clock this evening. Let me see. Eh! well, we must be twenty miles from Firbank. There's no village near this part of the line; and were it otherwise, we could not venture through such deep, dense snow; we should get lost in the drift, and be buried alive. I think there's a station about three miles behind us, and another, which the train don't stop at, some six miles ahead, but how can we communicate with either!"

"But, Seymour," said Beauchamp, "when the train arrives at Firbank, will not our carriage be missed, and an engine be sent up the line in search of us?"

"That's true, Beauchamp. But still, we shall have to wait here nearly three hours, I suppose, for at the rate that blessed slow engine was going, it would take about two hours to reach Firbank; the snow lies so deep, you see. Come in here, boys; shut the doors and windows, spread the rugs all over you, and make your miserable lives

happy. We must help ourselves, and 'what can't be cured must be endured!' As the poet says,

'Learn how sublime a thing it is,
To suffer and be strong!' " *

But notwithstanding the encouraging language employed by Seymour, and the sage remonstrances of Fisher, it was some time before the younger boys became reconciled to this novel situation. And it must be owned that to be shut up in a railway carriage, on an obscure branch line, some miles from the nearest succour; and this, too, with the external temperature below zero, the sky heavy with clouds, the wind whistling shrilly, and the snow piled around in masses, was no very cheerful or exhilarating prospect to boys who had just left the warm caresses of their families, and the joys of their " own fireside." It was some consolation, to be sure, that the carriage was provided with a lamp and with feet-warmers; that its inmates were well clad, and equipped with great-coats, comforters, and thick woollen wrappers; and it was also a consolation to the younger boys that they were protected by two such renowned and trustworthy chieftains as Seymour and Fisher. When, therefore, they were made to understand that on the arrival of the train at Firbank their mishap would certainly be discovered, and officials sent in search of them, and that, at the utmost, their detention could not exceed three to four hours, they were in some manner comforted, and, if not reconciled to their misfortune, were prepared to endure it with composure.

Now arose the important question—How should they pass the time? Three hours of enforced quietude is by no means a pleasant consideration for active and eager boys. Fisher and Seymour were old enough and studious enough to have resources within themselves; but their younger

* Longfellow, 'Poems.'

companions, though emphatically "good boys," whom a common liking for reading and quiet intellectual pursuits had bound together with the ties of friendship, could hardly be expected to prove equal to the occasion. Beauchamp only expressed the general opinion of his fellows, when, after a few minutes' silence, he exclaimed, "I begin to understand the horrors of ennui!—This is awfully dull! I wouldn't mind being imprisoned here for two or three hours, if I knew what to do with myself. My books are in my trunk, and I have neither pencil nor paper, so I can't photograph young Lambert as he sits there, in blissful enjoyment of his ham-sandwich *pabulum*. What *shall* we do?"

"What *shall* we do?" was lugubriously echoed by Douglas and Vernon; but the question seemed a poser, as no one replied to it.

"I say, Seymour," exclaimed Beauchamp, after a brief pause, "have you done any versifying during the vacation? Have you courted the Muses, eh?"

"I have flirted with those young ladies but very little," replied Seymour, smiling; "my time has been so fully engaged."

"You might read us a piece or two," continued Beauchamp, "if you have your manuscript anywhere at hand."

"Here is a set of stanzas which appeared in the poet's corner of the *Dibbleton Weekly Herald*."

"What? In print! A piece of yours in print? Huzza, what a jolly clever fellow you are, Seymour," shouted the boys, who seemed to take his public appearance as a great compliment to themselves and the school generally. Seymour passed the newspaper round for examination, and it was contemplated with admiring interest by each of his companions. Yes, there it was, sure enough, with the author's name in full! Seymour had certainly won the laurel of the

poet, and was thenceforth to be regarded with a species of reverent awe. Firbank Academy had produced a second Byron, perhaps, or another Tennyson; and the boys glorified themselves amazingly.

Then came an eager demand that Seymour should read his verses aloud.

To this request he not unwillingly consented. What young poet ever refused to make the world acquainted with his nascent genius?

"I have entitled my verses," said Seymour, "DAY-DREAMS; they are very simple, as you will acknowledge.

"DAY-DREAMS.

"DREAMS of a fair land flushed with endless fancies,
Sweet rippling rills, and wide o'erarching trees;
Lakes sheeny, waveless, where the splendour glances
As from a sunlit breadth of corn-spread leas;
Where throbs a soft, mysterious music, coming
On the charmed ear, like the bees' distant humming!

"Dreams of a haunted isle—an island lonely—
Whose shores are whitened with quick-flashing waves;
Where the swift-wingèd sea-bird wanders only,
And rank weeds thrive on unremembered graves.
An island lonely in the winter-ocean,
Whose depths are pained with the winds' fierce emotion!

"Dreams of a garden-bower—a wealth of roses;
An odorous bloom of may and eglantine,
Where fond Adonis lulled in sleep reposes,
And Cupids from their lyres breathe song divine;
Where the bright harebell like a wine-cup flushes,
And 'creepers mellow for autumnal blushes.'

"Dreams of brave music borne from heights of splendour,
The ringing sounds of bugles floating far;
Or echoes of a strain more soft and tender,
By love-lutes touched 'neath Hesper's lonely star;
Or those strange voices of mysterious passion—
The woodlands in their deep recesses fashion.

"Dreams of the rushing battle, and the omen
Of death, disaster, and a fatal field;
Of shivering lances, and close-grappling foemen;
Of clustering flags, and swords which heroes wield.
Dreams, dreams, all dreams—yet big with echoing thunder
Of the hoarse cannon, rending earth asunder.

"Dreams of the leas, the crofts, the valleys, sleeping
Fair in the moonlight of the happy Past!
Ah, never more shall corn be worth the reaping,
Nor roses be as red—they fade too fast;
They fade too fast—our manhood's frailer blossoms—
Or fall, death-chilled, upon our ice-cold bosoms!

"And thus they come, they go; the lights and shadows
Which, on a summer day, so swiftly sweep
O'er the broad surface of the ample meadows;
They come, they go—like fancies in our sleep—
The rarest phantoms these, which do but seem,
Like love, life, fame, the changes of a dream!"

A burst of applause greeted Seymour's effusion, hearty, generous, and long-sustained. If its readers in the *Dibbleton Weekly Herald* expressed for it but a tithe of the admiration manifested by the young poet's schoolfellows, he surely would have had no reason to complain.

"I like that verse," said Beauchamp, "about 'dreams of a lonely isle, far away in the winter ocean.' I have often thought I should like to play the part of a Robinson Crusoe or an Alexander Selkirk in some such secure retreat."

"Most boys," said Fisher, "have this wild sort of feeling at one time or another. I think it is nourished by the perusal of books of adventure; I am not sure whether such reading is altogether wholesome."

"Nay, Fisher," exclaimed Seymour, "you don't mean it. At all events, I cannot agree with your opinion. I believe the 'truth' which is 'stranger than fiction' gives a kind of *heroic flavour* to a lad's thoughts, encourages him in deeds of

daring and endurance, keeps alive the poetry in his composition, and prevents him from sinking into a humdrum, indolent monotony. Why, but for these stirring and glorious stories, where would be our Indian heroes, our successful soldiers, our gallant sailors, our courageous explorers of strange countries? I tell you, they are meat and drink for English boys; the strong food on which they grow up and flourish, until they mature into earnest and stalwart men! I would not give a straw for a lad who has not a spice of romance in him."

"I wish," interrupted Beauchamp, "we had some book here with 'a spice of romance' in it. By the by, Fisher, what volume have you yonder? It looks like manuscript."

"It *is* manuscript," replied Fisher. "During the holidays I have been reading several works on natural history, which I found in the Dibbleton library; and I amused myself with compiling from them a sort of description of the principal beasts of prey. I thought it might prove useful for reference, as well as pleasant to skim over in a leisure hour."

"Any stories about animals in it?" inquired Douglas.

Before Fisher could reply, Seymour exclaimed, "I've got it, boys. I tell you how we may spend our time here very pleasantly. We'll choose some particular animal—lion, elephant, or the like—by drawing lots. Then shall Fisher, out of yon great green book, read us his account of its habits and characteristics; and afterwards we will take it in turns—all of us, you know—to tell some story or anecdote respecting it: a lion-hunt, a tiger-hunt, or an escape from a leopard. *Qu'en pensez-vous, mes amis? Dicite, O pueri!* Is not this a good idea?

"Oh, capital, capital!" shouted the little band of captives; and Fisher having expressed his approval, Seymour proceeded to cut up a sheet of paper into slips, on each of which

he wrote in pencil the name of a wild animal, suggested by one of the boys. These were folded up, shaken together in a cap, and Mountjoy, as the youngest, made the first dip into what Seymour afterwards called "The Forest, the Jungle, and the Prairie."

"What have you chosen?" cried Douglas.

Mountjoy opened the folded slip, and read aloud, "The LION."

"Good," said Seymour, "that's a lucky hit. Boys, we must fancy ourselves transported to the forests of Africa, to pay our homage to the king of beasts. Now, then, what have we to say about his majesty? Silence, boys; and mind, no rude interruptions! All ready? That's right, then. Come, who will begin?"

II.

The Lion: His History and Habits.

STORIES OF ADVENTURES WITH LIONS—ANECDOTES ILLUSTRATIVE OF THEIR STRENGTH AND FEROCITY.

["A GREAT deal may be said about the lion," remarked Mountjoy in a somewhat consequential tone, "and much may be said in his favour, but I am not prepared to admit that he deserves the title he so long has borne of 'King of animals.' Like some other kings, I look upon him as a rank usurper."

"What?" exclaimed Seymour; "do you deny the regal prerogatives ascribed to this noble quadruped from earliest antiquity? Do you forget what the poets have said? Take but one example, from the well-known Fables of accomplished Gay." And the youthful poetaster repeated the following lines:—

"'What hardy beast shall dare contest
My matchless strength? . . . .
Forced to forego their native home,
My starving slaves at distance roam;
Within these woods I reign alone;
The boundless forest is my own.
Bears, wolves, and all the savage brood,
Have dyed the regal den with blood.'

"The '*regal den*,' you observe—

'These carcases on either hand,
These bones that whiten all the land,
My former deeds and triumphs tell,
Beneath these jaws what numbers fell!' "

"Well, if he has any claim to the royal title," said Fisher, "it is on account of his cruelty; about the only claim which a great many 'crowned madmen' could have put forward. But come, Douglas, you may as well begin the game. Tell us a lively story, and let us hear something of interest about this most magnanimous monarch of the forest."

"Oh," cried Vernon, "I can tell you a jolly tale about lions; you won't forget it in a hurry."

"About Androclus, I daresay," remarked Seymour in a tone of contempt; "and how he extracted the thorn from the lion's wounded foot; and how the grateful lion, in return, fed him in the place of concealment he had chosen, and how —but every muff knows *that* story; why, it's as old as the hills."

"No, Seymour, it was nothing about Androclus, but—"

"Come, Vernon, your turn is not yet. Spout away, Douglas, and we'll hear Vernon's yarn afterwards."

"But first," said Douglas, "our natural historian here, Fred Fisher, had better post us up in the scientific part of the subject. Bring out your manuscript, Fred,—positively, I wonder you had patience to cover such acres of paper!"

"'The labour we delight in physics pain,' "

interrupted Seymour, *sotto voce.*

"I found it a pleasure rather than a toil, though I little thought how soon my labours would contribute to the amusement of others. But do you really wish me to read what I have collected about the lion?" said Fisher, looking

round, with a smile on his well-cut lips, and a light in his mild clear eyes.

"Of course we do, old fellow," said Seymour. "Do we not, gentlemen of Dr. Birch's establishment?"

"*Omnes! omnes!*" was the reply, in stentorian tones that echoed far over the wide and wintry moor, and startled the plover in her reedy covert.

"Then here goes," said Fisher, pulling out his neat but portly volume of MS. "The lion—*Felis leo*, as he is scientifically named—"

"*Felis leo!*" exclaimed Vernon; "*felis*, a cat—*leo*, a lion! Why, is the lion a cat?"

"Did you not know that, stupid?" said Mountjoy.

"All the animal world," explained Fisher, "has been divided by naturalists into various groups and families, and in each group are included those animals which, in structure and habits, bear a certain resemblance to one another. Natural history," he continued, turning to another part of his MS., "is based, as Cuvier remarks, on what may be called a *System of Nature;* or a great catalogue, in which all living things bear acknowledged names, may be recognised by distinctive characters, and are distributed in divisions and subdivisions, themselves named and characterised, wherein they may be found.*

"All beings possess, or *do not* possess, a spine or backbone; hence we have two great divisions to begin with—the *Vertebrata*, and the *Annulosa.*

"The *Vertebrata* are distinguished by having a backbone or vertebral column; as man, quadrupeds, birds, reptiles, and fishes.

"The *Annulosa* (Articulata) comprise insects, worms, the mollusca, rotatoria, entozoa, radiata, infusoria, sponges, and

* Cuvier, 'Animal Kingdom,'—Introduction.

other imperfect forms, so to speak, of animal life. These have no skeleton; the muscles are attached only to the skin, —a soft contractile envelope, in which, in many species, are formed stony plates called shells, whose production and position are analogous to that of the mucous body. Other distinctive features will be remembered by every boy who has scrutinized either a worm, a spider, or a jelly-fish.

"To return to the Vertebrata; this great division is subdivided into four classes."

"I know them," interrupted Vernon. "When I went to the Zoological Gardens my father made me repeat their names. *Mammalia*, or animals which suckle their young—"

"From *mamma*, Latin for breast, I suppose," added Mountjoy.

"Precisely so. *Aves*, or birds; *Reptilia*, or reptiles; and *Pisces*, or fishes."

"'The finny tribe their glittering scales unfold,'"

murmured Seymour.

"Quite right, Vernon," continued Fisher. "Well, we will only trouble ourselves now about the *Mammalia*, which are again classified into *ten orders*. Write them down, boys, as I repeat them; you have got pencils, and the information may be useful some day.

"Order I.—*Bimana*, or *two-handed*, which contains only one example—*man*. Man, the lord of creation and heir of immortality."

Seymour could not resist so favourable an opportunity for a quotation, and exclaimed:—

"'What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason; how infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! in action, how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god!—The beauty of the world; the paragon of animals!' Hem—Shakspeare."

"Order II.—*Quadrumana*, or *four-handed;* as monkeys, apes, ourang-outangs, baboons, and—"

"Gorillas," exclaimed Vernon.

"Order III.—*Carnaria:* including sub-orders *Cheiroptera*, or winged hands, like bats; *Insectivora*, or insect-eaters, such as the shrew, hedgehog, and mole; and *Carnivora*, or flesh-eaters, as the bear, glutton, racoon, weasel, otter, dog, fox, wolf, jackal, lion, tiger, leopard, hyæna, cat, puma, jaguar, seal, and walrus.

"Order IV.—*Marsupialia*, or pouched animals. Can you give three examples of this order, Vernon?"

"Yes; you mean the opossum, kangaroo, and wombat, do you not? The two latter belong only to Australia, I believe."

"And the opossum to America."

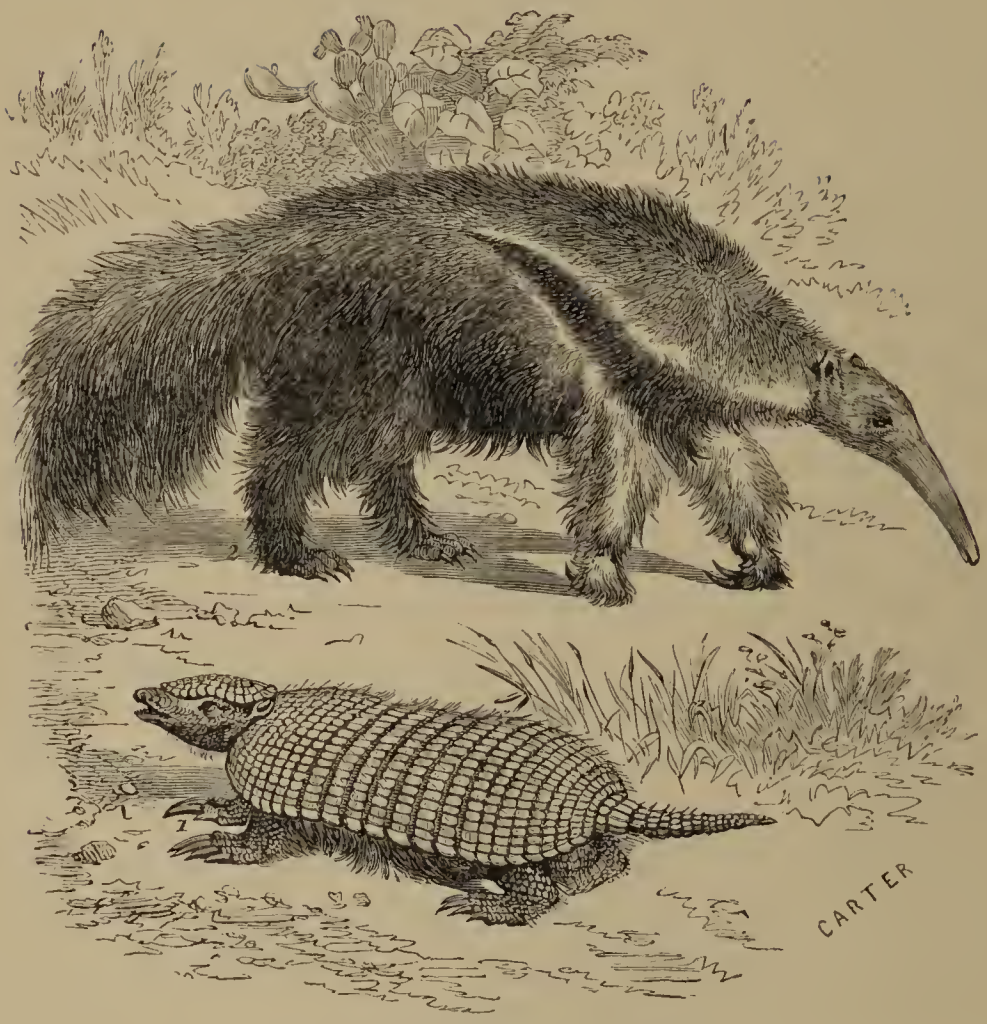
"As the song says: 'Possum up a gum-tree,'" rejoined Vernon.

"Order V.," continued Fisher—"*Rodentia*, the *gnawing* animals—from *rodo*, I gnaw;—such as the squirrel, marmot, dormouse, vole, rat, beaver, hare, rabbit, cavy, agouti, and other denizens of the tropics.

"Order VI.—*Edentata*, or without teeth—that is, in the front of the jaws. To this order belong the armour-clad and insect-devouring armadillos of South America, the tree-haunting sloths and hairy ant-eaters of the same region, and the lizard-like manis, with its impenetrable coat of mail.

"Order VII.—*Pachydermata*, or thick-skinned; an order which includes various animals that in other respects are not very closely allied; as the elephant, the tapir, wild boar, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus; and the horse, quagga, and zebra. Some writers, however, place the latter in

"Order VIII.—*Solidungula*, or solid-hoofed; and then, for



GREAT ANT-EATER AND ARMADILLO.

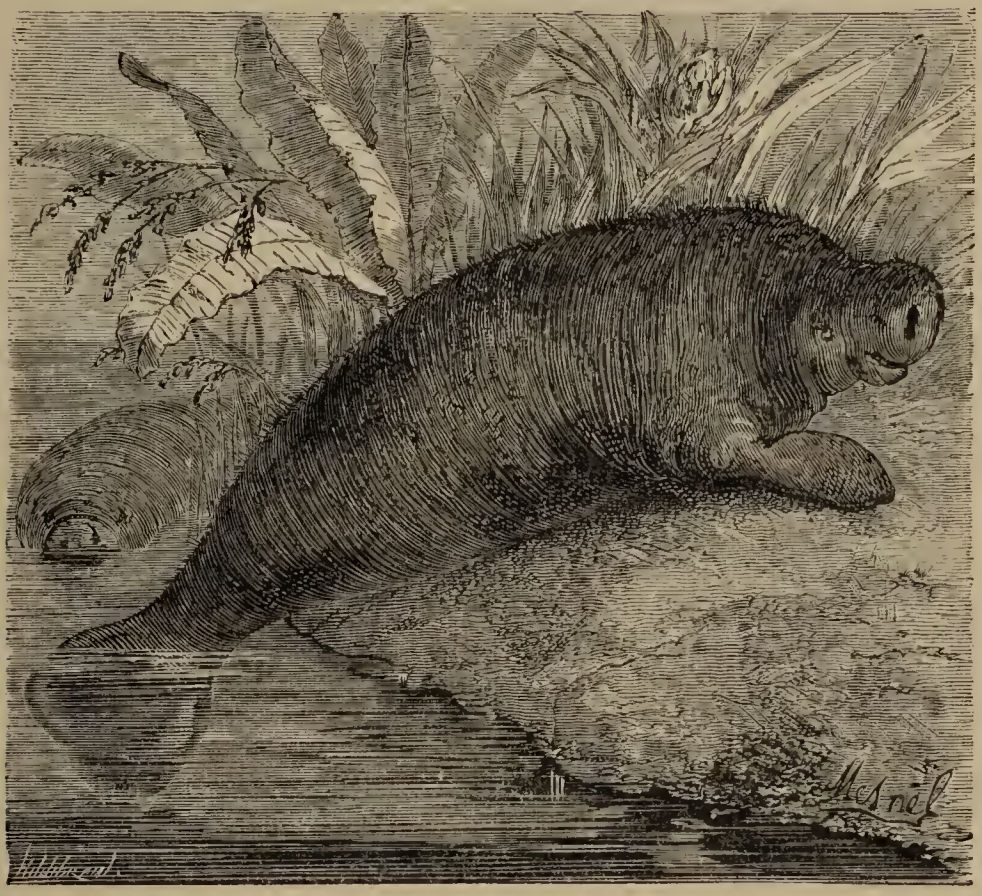
"Order IX., we get the *Ruminantia*, or animals that ruminate—chew the cud, as we say; such animals as the patient camel, the woolly alpaca, the laborious lama, the antlered deer, goats, sheep, oxen, and the like.

"Order X. includes the *Cetacea;* whales, porpoises, dolphins, grampuses, and sea-cows."

"Sea-cows!" exclaimed Vernon: "what sort of milk do *they* yield?"

"The sea-cow, or *Manatus*, is an herbivorous marine animal, not at all like a cow, but 'very like a whale.' It feeds upon the herbage which clothes the banks of the great

rivers in South America; a huge unwieldy monster, dragging itself along by the aid of its fins or paddles, and nearly as much at home on land as in the water.



THE SEA-COW.

" But now to return to the lion, whose majesty will think I am altogether forgetting him. The orders already described are arranged into *families* of animals closely connected in structure, habits, and disposition. I have told you of Order III., *Carnaria*, and its sub-order *Carnivora.* This sub-order comprises several families, one of which is the Cat family, *Felidæ;* and I will now read you Cuvier's account of it:—

"'The cats,' he says, 'are, of all the *Carnaria*, the most completely and powerfully armed. Their short and rounded muzzle, short jaws, and especially their retractile talons,

which they can sheathe and unsheathe at will, and which, being raised upward when at rest, and closing within the toes by the action of elastic ligaments, lose neither point nor edge, render them most formidable animals, and notably so the larger species.

"'They have two false molar teeth above, and two below. The upper carnivorous tooth three-lobed, with a broad heel on its inner side; the inferior with two pointed and cutting lobes, and without any heel; finally, they have only one very small upper tubercular, and no corresponding one in the lower jaws.

"'Unawares, with a sudden leap, these animals spring upon their prey, expending all their energy in the effort.

"'The species are exceedingly numerous, but though they differ widely in size and colour, they closely correspond in structure. We can only subdivide them by characters of trivial importance, as size, and the length of fur.

"'Thus, then, we have the cougar, puma, or so-called American lion, the cat, the lynx, the ounce, the leopard, the panther, the jaguar, the tiger, and the lion.'

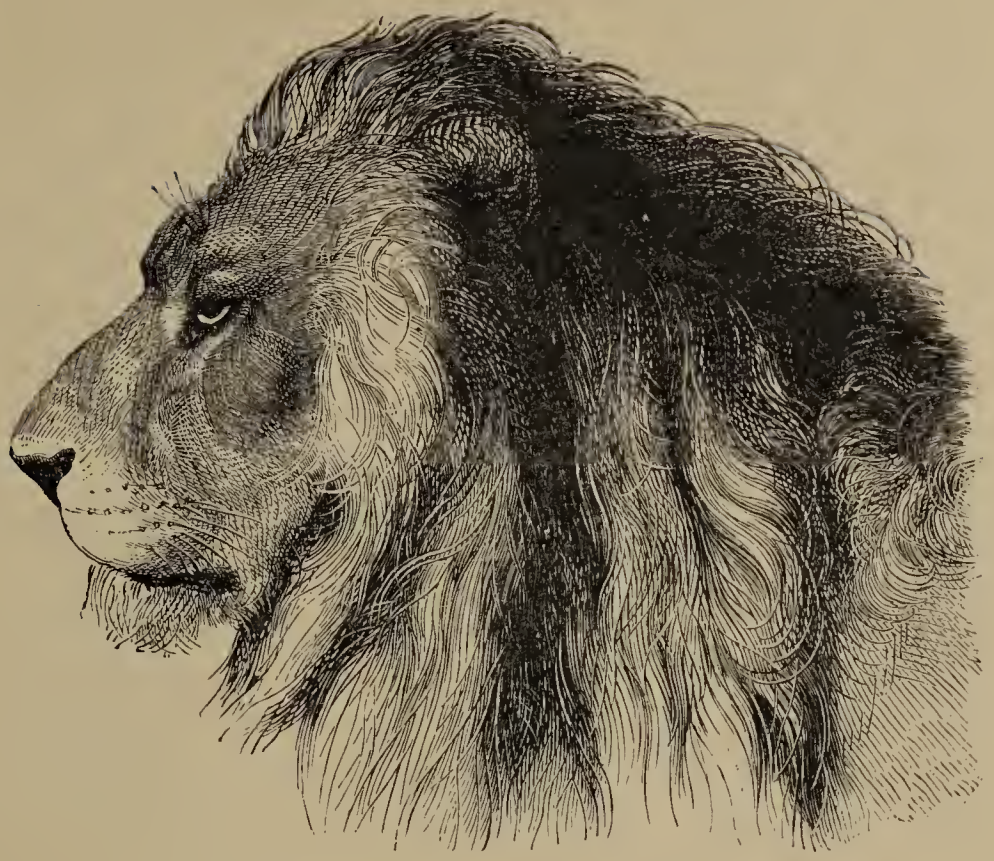
"Now, I hope Vernon understands why the scientific speak of the lion as *Felis leo.*

"He belongs to the family *Felidæ*, sub-order *Carnivora*, order *Carnaria*, class *Mammalia*, and division *Vertebrata.*

"With these introductory remarks, I proceed to a brief account of his habits and characteristics—if, indeed, you are not already weary of hearing me prose."]

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE LION.

The lion is a native both of Asia and Africa, but the Asiatic quadruped is reputed to be less courageous than his African



congener. It is evident, from the writings of the ancient historians, that he was at one time found in Europe, and during the sway of the Roman Cæsars he was common in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt; but in Asia his range is now almost entirely confined to the regions lying between India and Persia, and some of the wilder districts of Arabia. But his true country—his natural habitat—is Africa, in whose vast and untrodden wilds, in whose trackless forests and arid deserts, he reigns supreme.

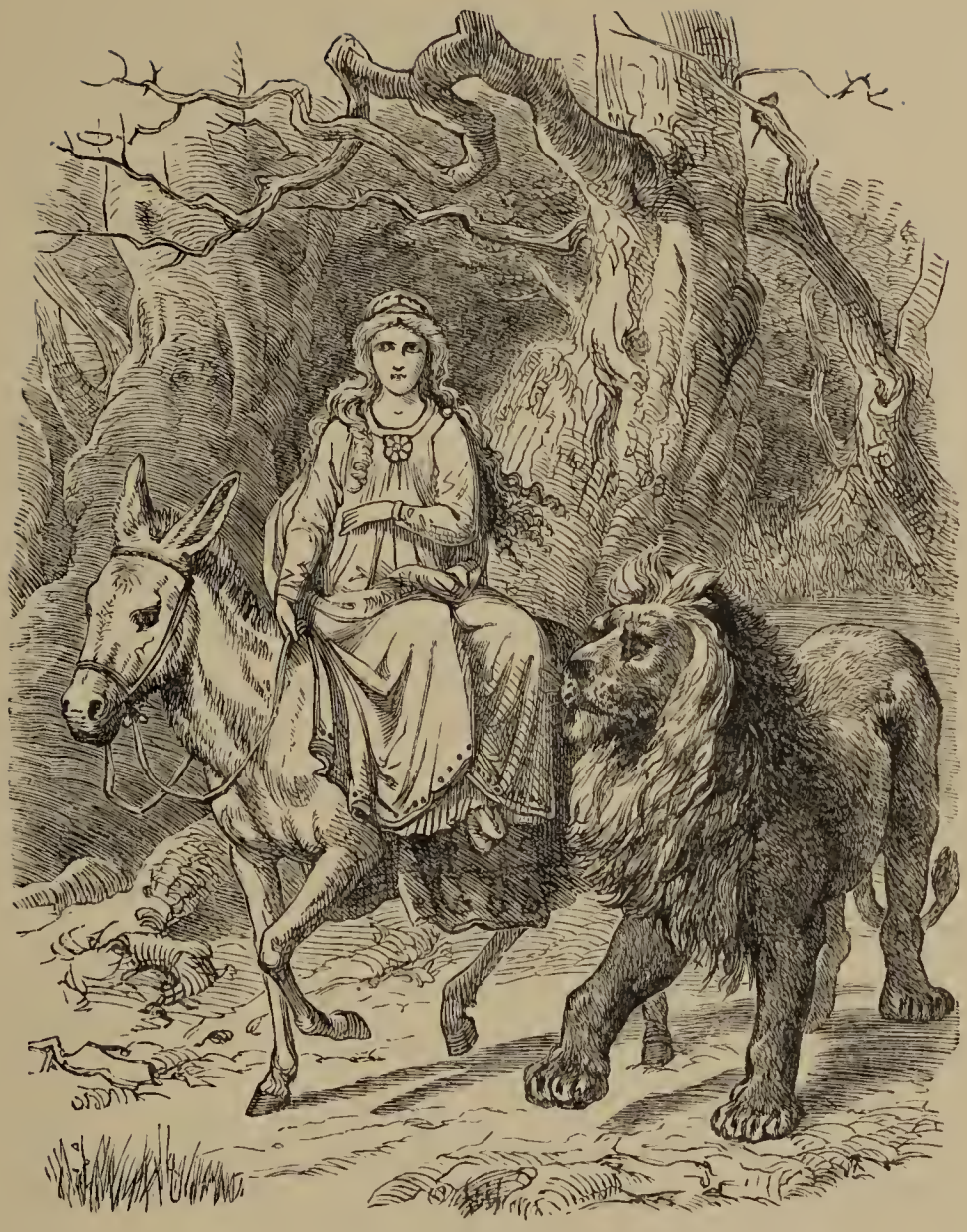
The general prey of the African lion, says Mr. Broderip, consists of the larger herbivorous quadrupeds, very few of which it is unable to master; and it is a severe scourge to the farmer, who is consequently ever on the watch for lions, and generally a most imperturbable and unerring shot. Though mortal accidents frequently happen in these hunt-

ings, the cool sportsman seldom fails of using his rifle with effect. Lions when roused, it seems, walk off quietly at first, and if no cover is near, and they are not pursued, they gradually mend their pace to a trot, till they have reached a good distance, and then they bound away. Eye-witnesses describe their demeanour on these occasions as of a careless and indifferent character; they neither court nor shun the affray. If they are closely pursued, they turn and couch, generally with their face to their foe; this is the critical moment that tests the sportsman's nerves. If he is composed, and thoroughly master of himself and of his craft, a well-directed shot ends the matter at once; but if, in the haste and anxiety of the moment, the vital parts are missed, or the ball glides by, leaving the king of beasts untouched, the infuriated animal frequently charges on his antagonist, and with fatal effect. Such, however, is not always the case; frequently he respects the dignity of man's stature and countenance; and a calm, unshrinking deportment has, on more occasions than one, saved the life of the hunter.

The lion of our poets and the lion of modern travellers are, it must be confessed, two very different animals. Who does not know the *leo ferox*, the lordly and majestic quadruped of the poetical imagination? Take, for instance, Spenser's lion, the glorious beast that ministered to the spotless Una. That fair and innocent lady, after wandering through woods and wastes to escape her persecutors, lays herself down in secret shadow, far from all men's sight, to obtain a little repose.

'Her angel's face,
As the great eye of heaven, shinèd bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place;
Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace!'

Faery Queene, Bk. i., c 3.



UNA AND THE LION.

While slumbering there, an unwelcome intruder enters the grassy retreat :—

'It fortunèd, out of the thickest wood
A ramping lyon rushèd suddenly,
Hunting full greedy after salvage blood:
Soon as the royal virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily

To have at once devoured her tender corse:
But to the prey when as he drew more nigh,
His bloody rage assuagèd with remorse,
And, with the sight amazed, forgot his furious force.

'Instead thereof he kissed her weary feet,
And licked her lily hands with fawning tongue;
As he her wrongèd innocence did weet.*
Oh, how can Beauty master the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!'

Such is the lion as pictured by our great poet; and the mere mention of his name calls up to our fancy a glowing sketch of a wild and furious animal, whose roar makes all the beasts of the forest tremble, whose bounds shake the burning plain, whose eyes flash with fire—an animal capable of sudden impulses of generosity, but deadly and relentless in his wrath—an animal of regal port and majestic mien, clothed with the thunder of battle, and armed with all the dignity of strength!

["Hear, hear, hear!" cried Fisher's listeners, while the excited reader paused to wipe his forehead, and take breath.]

Let us contrast this radiant picture with the truth as told by Dr. Livingstone, one of the most intelligent and enterprising of modern travellers.†

The African lion, he tells us, is somewhat larger than the biggest dog, and the face partakes very strongly of the canine characteristics. If you meet him in the daytime, he gazes for a second or two, then turns slowly round, walks away in a leisurely manner for a dozen paces or so, quickens his step to a trot till he thinks he is out of sight, and then gallops off like a greyhound. As a rule, while unmolested, he never attacks man in the daylight, though darkness makes him bold. When the moon was shining, we seldom tied up our

* Did weet, *i.e.*, did know.

† Dr. Livingstone, 'Missionary Researches in South Africa.'

oxen—says our traveller—but let them lie loose by the waggon; while on a dark rainy night, if there was a single beast in the neighbourhood, he was almost sure to attempt to kill one of our cattle.

Except the lion is wounded, his approach is always stealthy. But a lion with whelps—so strong is the parental feeling—will brave almost any danger. Cross where the wind blows from you to the animals, and both the lion and the lioness will rush at you! In such a case your chance of escape will be but small.

When a lion is maddened by hunger, and lying in wait for prey, the chance appearance of any animal will excite him to pursue it. A hunter who was stealthily crawling towards a rhinoceros, happened to glance behind him, and discovered—to his horror—that a lion was stalking *him*. He only escaped by nimbly climbing a tree. At Ropepe, a lioness sprang on the hind quarters of an English traveller's horse, which started off in fright, and the rider, caught by a projecting thorn, was dragged to the ground, and rendered insensible. He was saved by his dogs. The lion, like others of the feline species, is very suspicious of trap or ambush. A horse ran away, and was brought to a halt by the bridle catching a stump. He remained a prisoner for two days, and when found by his owner, the ground all about him was marked by the footprints of lions. They had been afraid to attack the haltered horse, from a suspicion that human ingenuity had devised some pit-fall for them.

On another occasion, two lions came by night within three yards of the place where some oxen were bound to a waggon, and a sheep to a tree. There they stood and roared, but never ventured to make a spring.

Again: three travellers were lying asleep, when a lion drew near them, and began to roar. The fact that their

riding-ox was fastened to an adjacent bush, deprived him of the courage to seize his prey. He retired to a knoll three hundred yards distant, where he amused himself—but not the wayfarers—by roaring all night, and continued to growl as the men moved off next morning.

'Nothing'—to quote from Dr. Livingstone—'that I ever learned of the lion would lead me to attribute to it either the ferocious or noble character ascribed to it elsewhere. He chiefly preys upon defenceless creatures; and frequently, when a buffalo calf is caught by him, the cow rushes to the rescue, and a toss from her often kills him. On the plain south of Sebituane's ford, a herd of these animals kept a number of lions from their young by the males turning their heads to the enemy. A toss, indeed, from a bull would put an end to the strongest lion that ever breathed.'

["What, a bull kill a lion? Who is your authority for that statement?" inquired Mountjoy.

"Did I not say Dr. Livingstone, the great African traveller and missionary?"

"Well, I shall never respect His Majesty Leo again—that's all," said Mountjoy; "he is no better than an impostor."

"Many men obtain fame," observed Seymour sententiously, "and as little deserve it as the lion."

"Go on, Fisher," cried Vernon; "it's very jolly, though I wonder how long we shall be kept in this railway prison."

"Remember the poet's advice, my friend," rejoined Seymour; "and learn

'To suffer, and be strong.'"]

It is questionable, (continued Fisher,) if a single lion ever engages a full-grown buffalo, for when one falls a victim

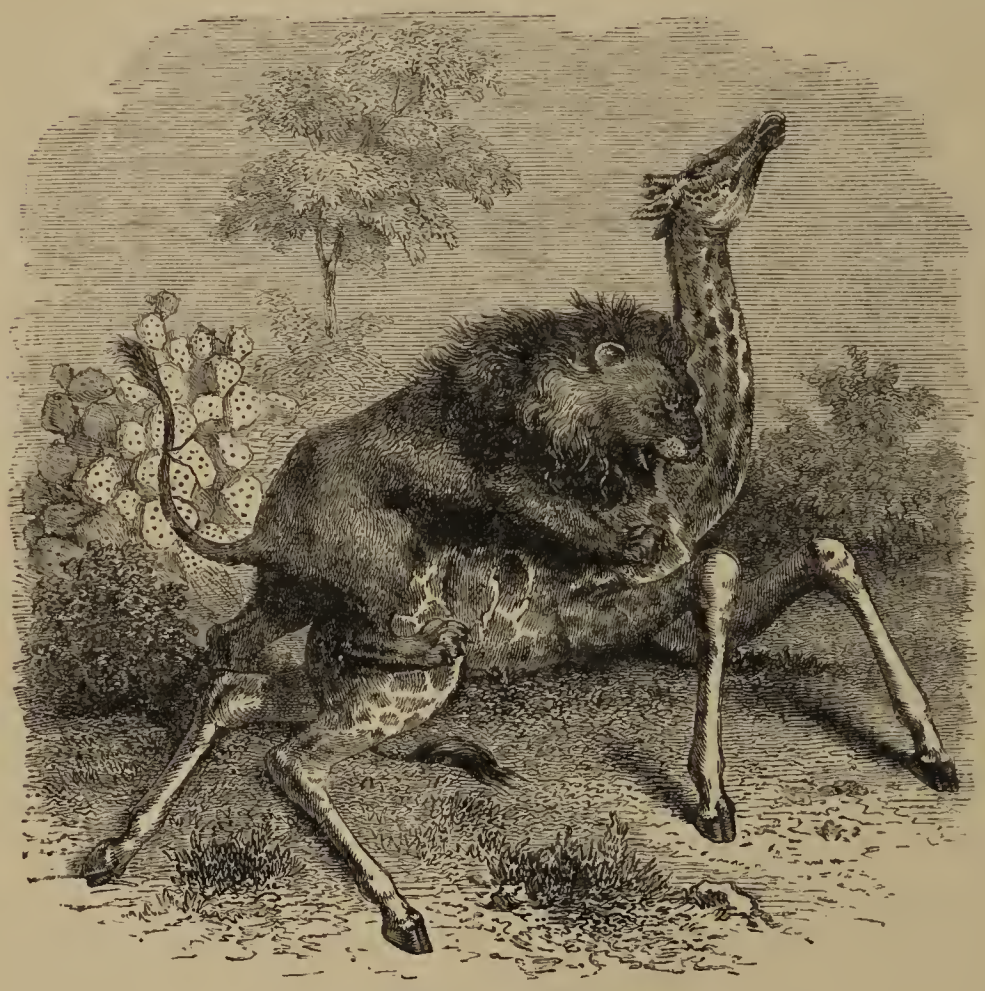
the amount of roaring seems to indicate that there has been a league to effect the slaughter. Messrs. Oswell and Vardon once saw three lions combine to pull a buffalo down, and they could not accomplish it without a struggle, though he was mortally wounded by a two-ounce ball.

["A grand sight," interrupted Seymour; "would that I might have been a spectator! Cannot you fancy it, boys? A burning, glaring, red-hot sky overhead—rank, dense jungle and brushwood all around—and then, the three monsters of the forest, with their tawny manes dishevelled, their eyes blazing and their cruel mouths wet with foam, springing upon the huge back of the buffalo, and, spite of his frenzied struggles, hurling him, bleeding and quivering, to the earth! How their exultant roar would fill the startled air! And then the mighty struggles of their victim—like Hector in the Homeric epopea, conquered by superior strength, but terrible even in his last agonies!"

"Bravo, Seymour; I declare you have made my flesh creep!" exclaimed little Vernon; and his comrades also expressed their admiration of the young poet's outburst. When the applause had subsided, and everybody was tired of kicking his heels against the woodwork of the railway-carriage, Fisher resumed his reading:—]

Dr. Livingstone asserts, upon information obtained from Indian travellers that even the tame buffaloes will chase a tiger up the hills, bellowing as if they enjoyed the sport. The calves of elephants are sometimes torn by lions; but every living thing retires before the lordly parent, though even a full-grown specimen would be an easier prey than the rhinoceros. At the mere sight of the latter's huge, unwieldy body the lion takes to flight. Yet of the lion's strength there can be no doubt. The immense masses of muscle around his jaws, shoulders, and fore-arms, indicate

tremendous physical power, though in this respect he seems inferior to the Bengal tiger. When he accomplishes such feats as taking away an ox, he does not *carry* the carcase, but drags it along the ground.



A FORMIDABLE OPPONENT.

Whether the lion ever attempts to seize an animal by the withers is doubtful, and he seldom mounts on its hind-quarters. He attacks his prey by springing at the throat or the flank—generally at the latter part, which he begins to feast on first. An eland will be found disembowelled so completely, that he scarcely seems cut up at all. The entrails and fatty portions afford even the largest lion a

sufficient banquet. When gorged, he falls fast asleep, and is then easily despatched. He sometimes slays the jackal with one stroke of his paw, as he prowls sniffing about the prey.

Where game is abundant, lions also abound; not in herds, but in groups—perhaps families—of six or eight, who occasionally hunt together. But travellers assert that the peril of being killed by lions in Africa cannot be compared with the danger of being run over in the streets of London. Hunting them with dogs is not so hazardous as hunting the tiger in India, for the dogs drive them from their covert. and while they stand at bay, the sportsman has time enough to take a deliberate and leisurely aim. In short, the conclusion seems to be, that to a man of ordinary courage the lion is not a particularly formidable animal.

Even the terrors of his roar are denied, to some extent, by our African explorer. It may inspire fear, he says, when heard in a deep dark night amidst the tremendous peals of an African thunderstorm, and the vivid flashes of lightning, which leave on the eye an impression of sudden blindness; but when you are safe within a house or waggon, it creates no feeling of awe. To which it may be answered, however, that the thunder of battle is heard with comparative indifference by him who watches the fight in all its varying fortunes, while it may well appal the soul of the combatant exposed to its deadly perils. The lion's roar is not more tremendous in itself when heard at night and in a tempest; it is the accessories that aggravate the wayfarer's alarm.

A European, it is said, cannot distinguish between the note of a lion and that of an ostrich. In general, the voice of the former seems to come deeper from the chest. The natives declare they can detect a difference at the commencement of the sound; and a considerable distinction undoubtedly exists between the singing noise of a lion when full, and his deep gruff growl when excited by the call of hunger.

The African lion is of a tawny colour, like that of some mastiffs. The large flowing mane of the male gives him an appearance of great power. In some specimens the ends of the hair are black, and these are called the black-maned lions, though in general appearance they look of the usual tawny colour.

There are three varieties of the African lion, viz:—

1. The *Barbary lion*, which has a deep brownish yellow fur, and a full flowing mane;

2. The *Senegal lion*, whose fur is of a brighter yellow, and the mane thinner; and,

3. The *Cape lion*, of which two species exist, one brown, the other yellowish—the former being the more powerful and ferocious.*

Turning to the Asiatic *lion*, we find three varieties also:—

1. The *Bengal.*

2. The *Persian*, or *Arabian*, now nearly extinct; and,

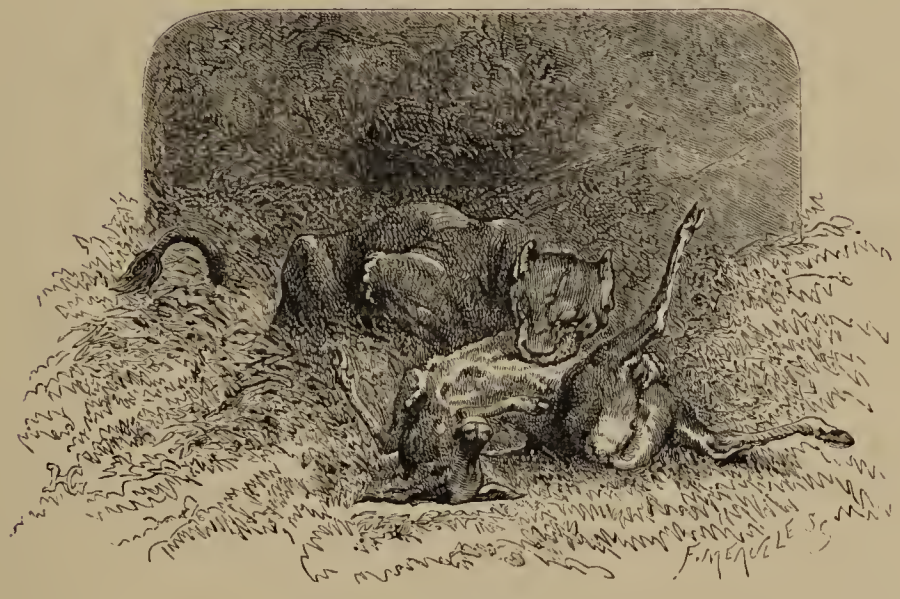
3. The *Maneless lion of Guzerat*, whose range is of very small extent.

The habits of the Asiatic lions do not differ much from those of their African congeners, excepting that the former, from the nature of the country, frequent the jungles. 'In India, the elephant is generally employed,' says Broderip, 'in the chase, which is even now conducted with more pomp and circumstance than in Africa. The grand Asiatic huntings of former times, those of Genghiz Khan, for example, were ceremonials of superb magnificence. The accounts of most Asiatic modern sportsmen give a most courageous bearing to the lions in these encounters. One states that the lions of India, instead of running away when pursued through a jungle, seldom take to cover as a refuge at all. On the approach of their enemies they spring out to meet

* Dr. Livingstone, 'Missionary Travels in South Africa.'

them open-mouthed in the plain. They are thus easily shot; but if they are missed or only slightly wounded, they are most formidable adversaries. They are even said to have sprung on the heads of the largest elephants, and to have fairly pulled them to the ground, riders and all.'

A lion of the largest size has been found to measure about eight feet from the nose to the tail, and the tail itself about half that length. The general colour is a pale tawny, inclining to white on the under parts. The head is very large, with rounded ears, and the face covered with short close hair; the pendent mane of long shaggy hair falls about the head, neck, and shoulders, and the tail is terminated by a tuft of blackish hair. The lioness is smaller than her lord, has no mane, and is of a whiter cast beneath.



A LIONESS AND HER PREY.

Throughout the day the lion usually slumbers in his covert, but at the approach of night he begins to prowl in search of prey. In his nocturnal habits he resembles the cat tribe generally.

In the tuft of hair which terminates the lion's tail is

concealed a horny prickle, scarcely three-eighths of an inch in length, wholly unconnected with the caudal vertebræ, and easily detached from the skin. Its uses do not appear to have been satisfactorily ascertained. His teeth are so strong that he breaks the bones of his victims with the utmost ease. He generally devours at one time as much food as will serve him for two or three days, seldom quitting his lair except in quest of prey. And, finally, the average duration of a lion's life is supposed to be about two and twenty years, though instances are given of his having attained the age of man.

Let me now carry you back in imagination to 'times of yore,' and to

THE WILD BEAST SHOWS OF ROME.

The wild beasts were surprised in their solitary haunts, and transported to Rome, for the purpose of exhibition in the games of the circus. In those days they infested the open villages and cultivated country, and they infested them with impunity. They were specially reserved for the pleasures of the emperor and the capital, and an unfortunate peasant who killed one of them, though in his own defence, incurred a very heavy penalty.*

At first these monsters of foreign climes were only exposed in the circus to satisfy the curiosity of the Romans; but soon they required a more stirring spectacle, and the animals were then matched against armed men. To these bloody contests the term *Venationes* was applied. The first *Venatio*, properly so called, took place at the games of Marcus Fulvius Nobilior, B.C. 186, after which the show gradually became more and more frequent, until, towards the close of the republic, no *Ludi Circenses* would have

* Gibbon, 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' c. iv.

been considered complete without its wild beast hunt; and Julius Cæsar found it necessary to cause the Euripus—a deep broad trench or moat—to be excavated for the protection of the spectators. Under the empire, the great amphitheatres were usually employed for these cruel sports.*

The number of animals destroyed on some of these occasions seems almost incredible. In the second consulship of Pompey, B.C. 55, 500 lions, 410 panthers and leopards, and 18 elephants, were killed in five days; Julius Cæsar turned 400 lions loose all at once; Caligula, at a festival in honour of Drusilla, caused 500 bears to be put to death in one day; and in the games celebrated on the return of Trajan from Dacia, 11,000 wild animals were butchered.

After the growth of Christianity in the Roman Empire, many of its professors, who refused to renounce the new religion and forswear their Saviour, were put to death by being exposed to the fury of lions, whose natural cruelty had been inflamed by hunger. Not only men, but women and children suffered. Neither age nor sex was secure from the blood-thirstiness of persecution. I have read several affecting narratives of this kind of martyrdom, with which I need not trouble my hearers.

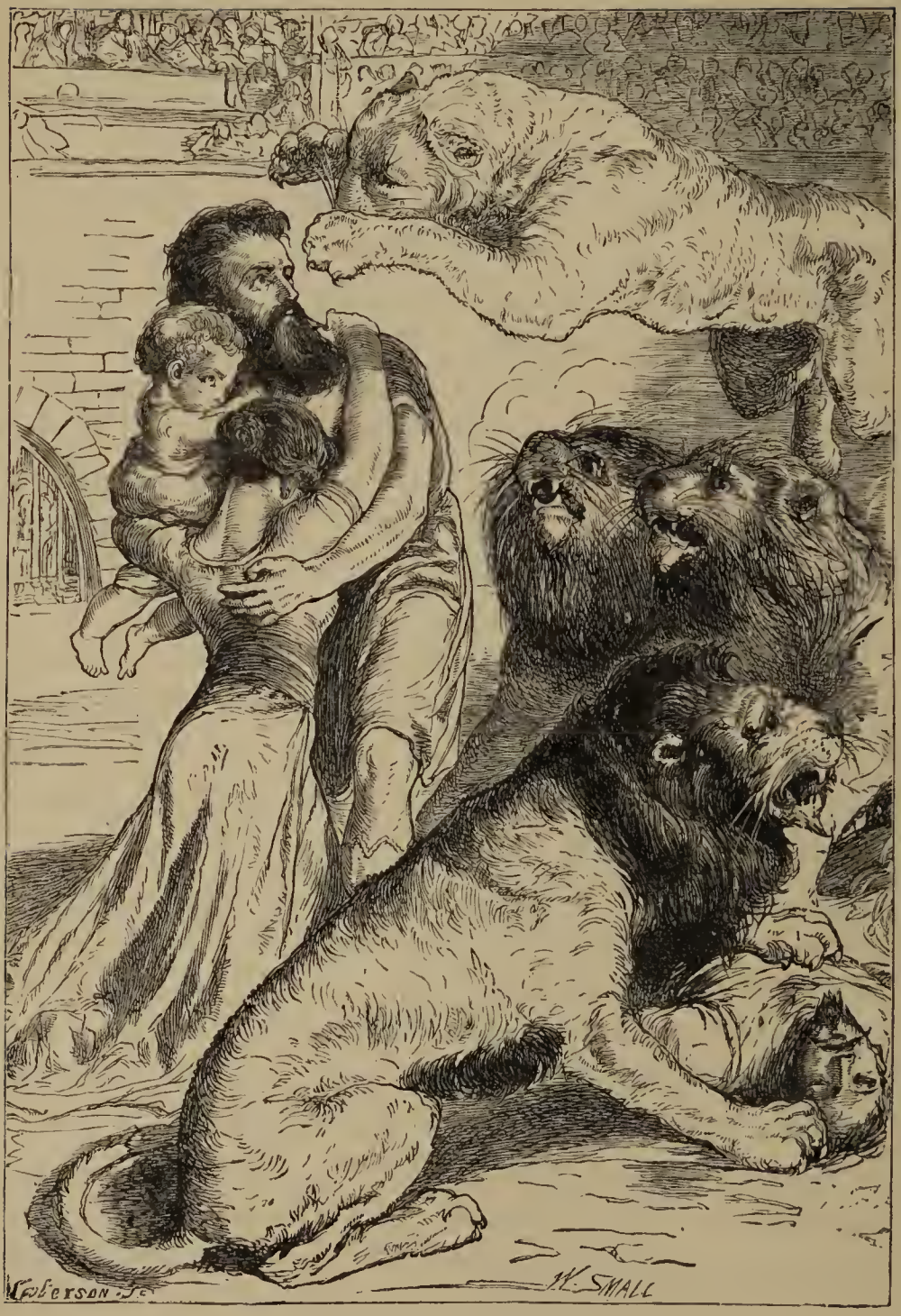
["But Seymour might give us a picture, just as he did about the lion and the buffalo—come now, Seymour—something very pathetic," said Douglas.

Seymour was not unwilling. He mused for a moment; then, with flushed cheek and kindling eye, began :—

THE LION AND THE CHRISTIAN MARTYR.

"Rich perfumes have been wafted around the crowded amphitheatre, and fresh sand scattered over its blood-stained

* Dr. Smith, 'Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities'



THE CHRISTIAN MARTYRS.

arena to conceal the traces of the massacre just completed; and now, the editor, who presides over the cruel scene, exclaims,—

"'Bring forth the lion, and him whom they call Paulus the Christian!'

"The officers enter that dark and wretched cell where the victims of imperial pride and injustice await their turn in the terrible tragedy of the arena. They find the Christian on his knees—in prayer to the God whom he has learned to love—in prayer for strength and succour from on high, that he may endure the last trial with Christian fortitude, and bear witness to the truth of his religion by the constancy of his soul. They anoint his body with unguents, to render the limbs more supple; they strip him of his garments, all save a cincture round the loins; they place a *stilus*, or short dagger, in his hand: a moment!—and he stands, the centre of ten thousand eyes, none of which beam with the tender glance of compassion.

"But he trembles not, nor falters. A celestial radiance seems to light his pale worn brow, and a luminous smile breaks around the compressed lips. He sees not the wolfish eyes that long to devour his sufferings; he hears not the fiendish shouts that proclaim the blood-thirstiness of a Roman mob; for his gaze is fixed upon the unutterable glories of another world, and his ears are filled with the songs of angels, the divine melodies of heaven!

"Do you see that low and hideous grated den yonder, in the arena? A lion—fierce and furious, for he has been kept without food for twenty-four hours, and he is mad with memories of his tawny mate far away in the wild, hot Lybian desert—a raging, roaring lion is imprisoned there, and struggles to be free.

"The editor gives the sign. The keeper, who stands behind the den, cautiously removes the grating, and himself escaping through the grated passage leading from the arena, leaves the lord of the desert alone with his prey.

"The lion looks slowly round, and with a mighty roar exults in his new-found freedom. Then a sense of blood-thirstiness comes upon him, for he recognizes the presence of the solitary Christian, and hunger has stimulated his appetite. Flinging back his deep full mane, he crouches.

"Paulus looks on unmoved. He knows that in a mortal struggle his stilus can avail him nothing. He knows that confinement and suffering have robbed him of all physical energy, and that a reed might as well contend with the ocean billows as he with a Libyan lion.

"Suddenly he flings aside his weapon. He cries, in a voice which rises clear and distinct above all the sounds of the amphitheatre, 'Into thy hands, O Lord, I commit my soul,' and casting himself upon his knees, is lost to this world for ever.

"The lion has sprung upon his prey, and Paulus the Christian is numbered with the noble army of martyrs."

After Seymour had ended, a moment's silence succeeded, for the boys were surprised by his earnestness, and moved by the picture which he had so boldly painted. Then they poured in their congratulations upon him, and the Fat Boy would fain have heard it all over again. As Seymour very decidedly refused compliance with this modest request, Fisher prepared to resume his jottings.]

The great shows of ancient Rome generally took place in the amphitheatres, the most magnificent of which was the *Coliseum*, whose glorious ruins still excite the wonder and move the admiration of travellers from far countries.

For nearly four hundred years it was the scene of gladiatorial spectacles, and during the persecution of the Christians the most horrible barbarities were perpetrated within its walls. Among the latter I may mention the martyrdom of St.

Ignatius,* who, accused of professing the opinions of the new and remarkable sect of *Christians*, was brought before the Emperor Trajan, and subjected to a rigid examination. The devout Bishop of Antioch would not palter with the truth to save even his life, and when the emperor demanded of him, 'Dost thou, then, carry him who was crucified within thee?' 'I do,' he answered boldly; 'for it is written, I dwell in them and walk in them.' To the Roman ruler this seemed the foolishness of ignorance or the recklessness of impiety, and he exclaimed, 'Since thou confessest that thou carriest within thyself him who was crucified, we adjudge that thou be taken from hence to Rome, and delivered over to wild beasts in the presence of our people.'

Ignatius longed to crown the devotion of his life with the glory of martyrdom, and rejected the intercession of several influential Romans. It was his hope, he said, that the lions would consume him utterly, and that not a fragment of his vile worldly body might be left. The early Christians, penetrated with the ideas of sacrifice and expiation, looked upon life as a thing to be parted with for the glory of God, and did not see how solemn a charge it was from heaven, and how they might best accomplish the divine will by a zealous discharge of its responsibilities. The body, in their eyes, was a burthen, an incumbrance, a sin—to be flung off as a sacrifice whenever an opportunity arose—and not the temple of the living God, which should be preserved with all reverence, and only yielded up at the voice of a clear and imperative duty.

* Recent writers have doubted the truth of the received story respecting Ignatius; it seems, however, certain that he really perished in the persecution under Trajan, though it is not so certain that he received his sentence from Trajan himself. The *Acta Martyrii*, on which the common account of the martyrdom is founded, the best authorities now consider spurious.—*See Guizot's Notes to his translation of Gibbon.*

When Ignatius was led to execution, he marched thither exulting and triumphant, attended by a number of the brethren praying and chanting hymns. He implored the Son of God, in behalf of the Churches, that He would terminate the persecution then raging against the Christians, and continue the love of the brethren towards each other. Then he was led into the amphitheatre, and delivered to the raging lions. And his hope was fulfilled—the beasts became his grave. Only a few bones were left, which the deacons reverently gathered, carefully preserved, and afterwards buried at Antioch.*

In illustration of the Roman games, I cannot do better than quote Gibbon's elaborate description† :—

'However,' he says, 'we may censure the vanity of the design or the cruelty of the execution, we are obliged to confess that neither before nor since the time of the Romans so much art and expense have ever been lavished for the amusement of the people. By the order of Probus a great quantity of large trees, torn up by the roots, were transplanted into the midst of the circus. The spacious and shady forest was immediately filled with a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand fallow deer, and a thousand wild boars; and all this variety of game was abandoned to the riotous impetuosity of the multitude. The tragedy of the succeeding day consisted in the massacre of a hundred lions, an equal number of lionesses, two hundred leopards, and three hundred bears. The collection prepared by the younger Gordian for his triumph, and which his successor exhibited in the secular games, was less remarkable by the number than by the singularity of the animals. Twenty zebras displayed their elegant forms and variegated beauty to the eyes

* Foxe, 'Acts of the Martyrs.'

† Gibbon, 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.'

of the Roman people. Ten elks, and as many camelopards, the loftiest and the most harmless creatures that wander over the plains of Sarmatia and Æthiopia, were contrasted with thirty African hyænas and ten Indian tigers, the most implacable savages of the torrid zone. The unoffending strength with which nature has endowed the greater quadrupeds was admired in the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus of the Nile, and a majestic troop of thirty-two elephants. While the populace gazed with stupid wonder on the splendid show, the naturalist might indeed observe the figure and properties of so many different species, transported from every part of the ancient world into the amphitheatre of Rome. But this accidental benefit which science might derive from folly, is surely insufficient to justify such a wanton abuse of the public riches.

'The hunting or exhibition of wild beasts was conducted with a magnificence suitable to a people who styled themselves the masters of the world; nor was the edifice appropriated to that entertainment less expressive of the Roman greatness. Posterity admires, and will long admire, the awful remains of the amphitheatre of Titus, which so well deserved the epithet of colossal. It was a building of an elliptic figure, 564 feet in length, and 467 in breadth, founded on fourscore arches, and rising, with four successive orders of architecture,* to the height of 140 feet.' †

["A magnificent building," interrupted Douglas; "but nothing compared to the great Egyptian pyramid, which rises, I think, to the height of 500 feet."

"It was one of the wonders of the world, though," said

* Doric, Ionic, and—two uppermost—Corinthian.

† According to Taylor and Cresy, 157 feet, and the breadth 468 feet. The arena was 278 feet long, by 177 feet wide.—*See Lord Broughton's 'Italy,' and the article 'Roma' in Dr. Smith's 'Dictionary of Ancient Geography.'*

Seymour. "Do you remember the famous prophecy of the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims? Byron puts it into verse:—

> 'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
> When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
> And when Rome falls, the world.'

But go on, Fisher."]

'The outside of the edifice'—I am still quoting Gibbon—'was incrusted with marble, and decorated with statues. The slopes of the vast concave, which formed the inside, were filled and surrounded with sixty or eighty rows of seats of marble, likewise covered with cushions, and capable of receiving with ease above fourscore thousand spectators. Sixty-four *vomitories* (for by that name the doors were very aptly distinguished), poured forth the immense multitude: and the entrances, passages, and staircases were contrived with such exquisite skill, that each person, whether of the senatorial, the equestrian, or the plebeian order, arrived at his destined place without trouble or confusion. The spectators were protected from the sun and rain by an ample canopy occasionally drawn over their heads. The air was continually refreshed by the playing of fountains, and profusely impregnated by the grateful scent of aromatics. In the centre of the edifice, the *arena*, or stage, was strewed with the finest sand, and successively assumed the most different forms. At one moment it seemed to rise out of the earth, like the garden of the Hesperides, and was afterward broken into the rocks and caverns of Thrace. The subterranean pipes conveyed an inexhaustible supply of water; and what had just before appeared a level plain, might be suddenly converted into a wide lake, covered with armed vessels, and replenished with the monsters of the deep. In the decoration of the scenes, the Roman emperors displayed their wealth and liberality; and we read, on

various occasions, that the whole furniture of the amphitheatre consisted either of silver, or of gold, or of amber.'

["Such is Gibbon's description of the Coliseum in its days of splendour. When was it built, Vernon? Can you tell us?"

"Vespasian began it in A.D. 72."

"Yes; and Titus dedicated it in A.D. 80, when five thousand beasts were slaughtered in the arena, and the games in honour of the event lasted over one hundred days. It was not completed, however, until the reign of Domitian."

"Was it not designed," inquired Seymour, "by Gaudentius, a Christian architect, who was afterwards martyred?"

"So runs the tradition; and it is said, which is much more probable, that several thousand captive Jews laboured at its erection. The last exhibitions recorded to have taken place within its walls, were a show of wild beasts in the reign of the Emperor Theodoric, and a bull-fight at the expense of the Roman nobles in the year 1332. It was originally called the *Amphitheatrum Flavium*."

"It is in ruins now, you say," remarked Mountjoy.

"Yes; not above a third of the original building remains; and many of the palaces of the Roman princes were built with its materials."]

I have often been pleased with Dickens's commentary on the suggestive spectacle it now presents :—*

'To see it crumbling there an inch a year; its walls and arches overgrown with green; its corridors open to the

* Dickens, 'Pictures from Italy.'—The reader will remember the lines in which that wild and irregular genius, Edgar Allan Poe, has commemorated the ruined pile :—

"Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!
Here, where the mimic Eagle glared in gold,

day; the long grass growing in its porches; young trees of yesterday springing up on its rugged parapets, and bearing fruit—chance produce of the seeds dropped there by the birds who build their nests within its chinks and crannies; to see its pit of fight filled up with earth, and the peaceful cross planted in the centre;* to climb into its upper halls, and look down on ruin, ruin, ruin, all about it; the triumphal arches of Constantine, Septimus, Severus, and Titus; the Roman forum; the palace of the Cæsars; the temples of the old religion, fallen down and gone;—is to see the ghost of old Rome, wicked, wonderful old city, haunting the very ground on which its people trod. It is the most impressive, the most stately, the most solemn, grand, majestic, mournful sight conceivable. Never, in its bloodiest prime, can the sight of the gigantic Coliseum, full and running over with the lustiest life, have moved one heart as it must move all who look upon it now—a ruin. God be thanked—a ruin!'

But I have digressed from the wild beast shows to the place where these sanguinary exhibitions were held.

The men who fought in these shameful fights were divided into various classes, of which the principal were the *Retiarii* and the *Bestiarii*.

> A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!
> Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair
> Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!
> Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
> Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
> Lit by the wan light of the horned moon,
> The swift and silent lizard of the stones!"
>
> POEMS, *Edited by Hannay.*

* A cross has been erected in the centre, and a rude pulpit, where a monk preaches a sermon every Friday—preaches the gospel of Christ on the spot where so many suffered because they believed it!

The former were dressed in short tunics. They carried a three-pronged spear or trident, and a little net—hence their name—which they flung over the head of their opponent. They fought only with men, and the combats generally ended fatally. When the conquered lay expecting the death-stroke, he was allowed by signs to implore the pity of the spectators. If they turned *down* their thumbs, he was spared; if the majority bent their thumbs *upwards*, he was immediately slain.*

Those who combated with wild beasts were called *Bestiarii*, and were selected from persons condemned to death, or from the lower order of slaves, who, if they escaped alive, received their freedom. The giver of the show—generally some wealthy citizen, or a public officer desirous

* Dr. Smith's 'Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities.' *See* Juvenal, Sat. iii. v. 36:—

"Converso pollice vulgi,
Quemlibet occidunt populariter."

(With thumbs bent back, they popularly kill.)

In illustration, we may extract a passage from Mr. Whyte Melville's vigorous story of 'The Gladiators' (bk. i. chap. 19):—The swordsmen range themselves in opposite bodies, all armed alike, with buckler and two-edged sword, but distinguished by the colour of their scarfs. They advance against each other, three deep, in imitation of the real soldiers of the empire. At the first crash of collision, when steel begins to clink, as thrust and blow and parry are exchanged by these practised warriors, the approbation of the spectators rises to enthusiasm; but men's voices are hushed, and they hold their breath when the strife begins to waver to and fro, and the ranks open out and disengage themselves, and blood is seen in patches on those athletic frames, and a few are already down, lying motionless where they fell.

And now the arena becomes a ghastly and forbidding sight; they die hard, these men, whose very trade is slaughter; but mortal agony cannot always suppress a groan, and it is pitiful to see some prostrate giant, supporting himself painfully on his hands, with drooping head and fast-closing eye fixed on the ground, while the life-stream is pouring from his chest into the thirsty sand.

It is real, sad earnest, this representation of war, and resembles the battle-field in all, save that no prisoners are taken and quarter is but rarely given. Occasionally, indeed, some vanquished champion, of more than

of popularity—was called the *Editor*. To screen the spectators from the sun, immense folds of woollen cloth were stretched across the seats—these were the *Velaria;* and a canopied platform, the *Podium*, was set apart for the emperor and his attendants. Such are some of the details of these sanguinary spectacles, which, by fostering a spirit of cruelty and a lust of fierce excitement, degraded the stern character of the ancient Roman, and contributed, indirectly but powerfully, to the decline and fall of the Eternal City.

["You have not told us the story of Androclus," said Vernon; "old as it is, I should like to hear it again."

"Well, I will repeat it to you as told by a quaint old writer, who gives it on the authority of Aulus Gellius."*]

ANDROCLUS AND THE LION.

One day, says he, as they were entertaining the people at Rome with the fighting of some wild beasts, and especially lions of an unusual size, there was one amongst the rest which, by its furious aspect, by the strength and largeness of its limbs, and by its loud and dreadful roaring, attracted the eyes of all that were present.

Among the other slaves that were brought to the theatre in this battle of the beasts, was one Androclus of Dacia, who belonged to a Roman nobleman of consular dignity. This lion perceiving him at a distance, first made a sudden stop,

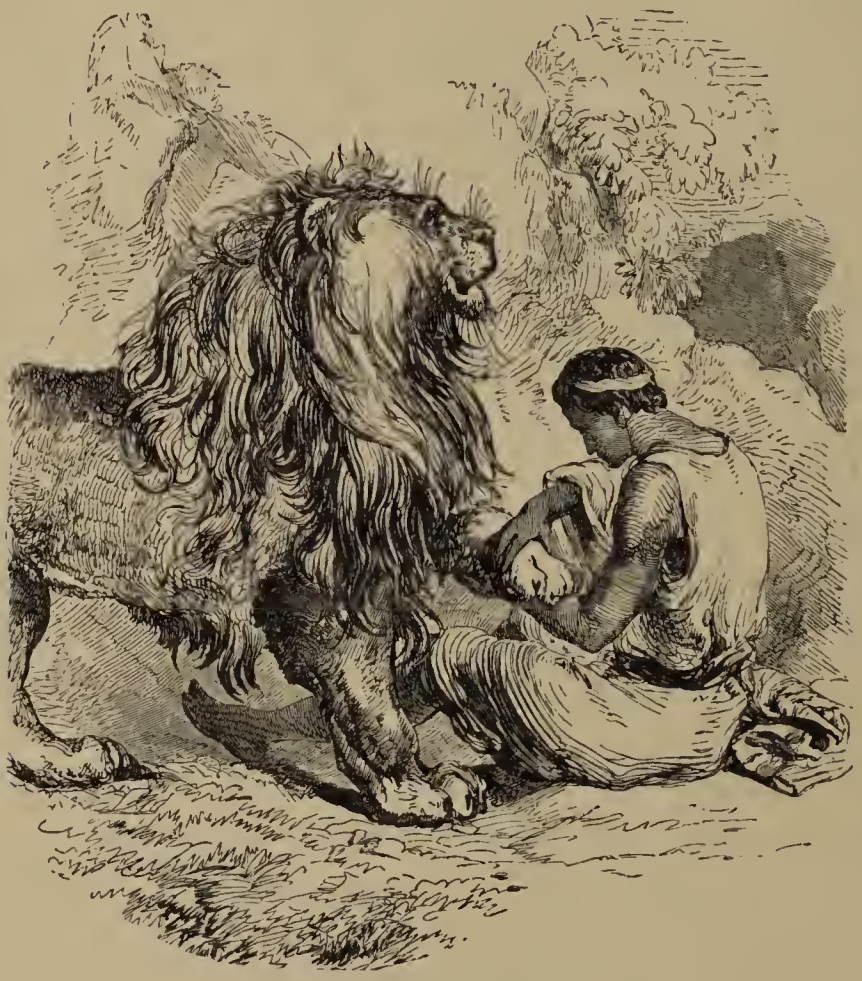
common beauty, or who has displayed more than common address and courage, so wins on the favour of the spectators, that they sign for his life to be spared. Hands are turned upwards, with the thumb pointing to the earth, and the victor sheathes his sword, and retires with his worsted antagonist from the contest; but more generally the fallen man's signal for mercy is neglected; ere the shout "Habet!" has died upon his ears, his despairing eyes mark the thumb of his judges pointing upwards, and he disposes himself to "welcome the steel," with a calm courage worthy of a better cause.

* Montaigne, 'Essays,' transl. by Cotton, ed. 1811 (vol. ii., pp. 89–101).

as it were with a look of admiration, and then softly advanced nearer in a gentle and peaceable manner, as if it desired to be acquainted with him. This done, and being now assured that he was the man it wanted, the lion began to wag its tail, as dogs do when they fawn upon their masters, and fell to kissing and licking the hands and legs of the poor wretch, who was quite beside himself, and half dead with fear; but being, by this kindness of the lion, a little come to himself, and having taken so much heart as to look at the beast, and to make much of it, it was a singular pleasure to see the caresses of joy that passed between them. The people breaking into loud acclamations at this sight, the emperor caused the slave to be called to him, in order to know from him the cause of so strange an occurrence, and he gave him this strange and wonderful relation:—

'My master,' said he, 'being a proconsul in Africa, I was constrained by his cruel usage of me, as he caused me to be beat every day, to steal from him and run away. And, in order to hide myself securely from a person of so great authority in the province, I thought it my best way to fly to the sandy and solitary deserts of that country, with a resolution, that if I could get nothing to support life, I would some way or other despatch it. The sun being so burning hot at noon that it was intolerable, I accidentally found a private, and almost an inaccessible cave, into which I went. Soon after, this lion came to it, with one paw wounded and bleeding; and the smart it endured made it complain and groan. Its approach terrified me very much; but no sooner had he spied me lurking in a corner of its den, but it came to me very gently, holding up its wounded paw to my sight, as if it begged my assistance. I then drew out a great thorn from it, and, growing a little familiar with

it, I squeezed the wound, pressed out the foul matter that was gathered in it, wiped it, and cleansed it in the best manner I could. The lion, finding its pain assuaged, and the cause of it removed, laid itself down to rest, and slept all the time with his paw in my hands. From that time forwards, the lion and I lived together in this den for three



ANDROCLUS AND THE LION.

whole years upon one and the same diet; for, of the beasts which it killed in hunting it brought me the best pieces, which I roasted in the sun for want of a fire, and then ate them. At length, being quite tired with this brutal, savage life, as the lion was gone out one day, as usual, in search of

its prey, I set out from its den; and on the third day after my departure was seized by soldiers, who brought me to this city from Africa, and delivered me up to my master, who presently condemned me to die, and to be exposed to the wild beasts.'

This was the story as related by Androclus to the Emperor Tiberius, who caused him to be set at liberty, and presented him with the lion. He might afterwards be seen leading the generous animal, by nothing but a string, from tavern to tavern at Rome, and receiving the bounty of the people, the lion being so gentle as to suffer itself to be covered with the flowers that were thrown upon it, while every one that met them cried, 'There goes the lion that protected the man!' and 'There goes the man that cured the lion!'

["Capital! capital!" shouted Mountjoy; and his comrades also testified their approval.

"And now I have no more to say about the lion."

"Gentlemen," said Seymour, rising, with his hands in his waistcoat pockets, puckering his brows, and puffing out his cheeks with a ludicrous affectation of solemnity, "it becomes my duty, on this interesting occasion, to move that the thanks of the meeting be cordially presented to Mr. Fisher, for the able and eloquent narrative with which he has favoured us. At the same time, I am sure I only express the sentiments of my friends when I utter the fervent hope, that before we part he will oblige us with some more of his lucubrations, which are as interesting as they are amusing, and as amusing as they are interesting. Those who agree with me will please to signify the same by holding up their hands."

Here the inmates of that solitary railway-carriage held up both hands, and gave vent to their feelings in a tremendous shout, repeating it again and again, until their lungs were exhausted.

"Carried *nem. con.*," said Seymour, gravely. "Fisher, we'll trouble you to return thanks."

"Which I will do in a few words. Gentlemen, I am sincerely grateful for the honour you have done me, and shall at all times feel it a pride and a pleasure to comply with your wishes."

"Hear, hear, hear," said—or rather gasped—the Fat Boy, and flung himself back in the corner of the carriage, to regale on another ham sandwich.

"Why," said Beauchamp, "why was King Richard called *Cœur-de-Lion?* Is there not some legend respecting it?"

"Yes," replied Seymour; "and I think I can remember the principal incidents. Do you not recollect Shakspeare's allusions?—

'Richard, that robb'd the lion of his heart;'

and, again:—

'Against whose prey and unmatched force
The aweless lion could not wage the fight,
Nor keep his princely heart from Richard's hand.' *

"The old legend† says that Richard had fallen in love with the Princess Margery, daughter of the King of Almagn (Germany), who thereupon resolved to put him to death. A fierce and powerful lion was selected to be his executioner, after it had been kept three days and three nights without food, to increase its natural ferocity. It was then let loose in the dungeon where King Richard was imprisoned. But the gallant Richard boldly wrestled with the furious beast, tore open his jaws, thrust his arm down the throat, plucked forth the heart, and slew him on the spot. Then he strode into the hall where King Modard and his courtiers sat at the

* Shakspeare, *King John*, act ii.

† The Norman-French romance of Cœur-de-Lion was probably composed about the middle of the thirteenth century, and done into English about the beginning of the fourteenth.

banquet, and dipping the heart into salt, ate it raw, 'without bread.' Modard, in his wonderment, exclaimed :—

'I wis, as I undyrstande can,
This is a devyl, and no man,
That has my stronge lyoun slawe ;
The harte out of hys body drawe,
And hath it eeten with good wylle !
He may be callyd, be ryght skylle,
King inystenyd of most renoun,
Stronge Rychard Cœr-de-Lyoun.'

"Such is the tale, gentlemen."

"Very good," rejoined Fisher ; "many of the particulars are new to me, and I shall jot them down in my manuscript. By the way, do you know why some lions were always kept at the Tower of London, down to the reign of William IV.? My father remembers to have seen them there, about thirty-four years ago. Why, it was the fashion for all strangers who visited the metropolis to see the Tower lions ; hence, I am told, the common expression, 'the lion' of a place or an assemblage,*—'Mr. so-and-so was quite the lion of the evening.'"

"Well, Fisher, tell us something about them."]

THE TOWER LIONS.

It was the custom of our Plantagenet sovereigns, (said Fisher,) to quarter three leopards on the royal shield. You know, perhaps, that Napoleon referred to this when he designated England as the 'leopard,' and spoke of 'driving the leopard into the sea.' Well: the Emperor Frederick of Germany, in complimentary allusion to the Royal arms, sent Henry III. a present of three leopards, which were placed in the Tower, then the palace and residence of the English sovereigns. It became the fashion thereafter to keep up the

* Chambers, 'Book of Days.'

supply of these living representatives of the royal symbol and cognizance, but the leopard gave way to the lion, as a nobler and more truly regal animal. The keeper of the lions was a gentleman of family, and their maintenance was provided on a liberal scale. Nor was it until the reign of William IV. that they were removed to a more fitting locality —the Zoological Gardens.

The lions were generally named after the reigning sovereigns, and it was supposed that the fate of the latter was closely bound up with that of the royal beast. Lord Chesterfield, speaking of an illness of George II., remarks, 'It was generally thought his Majesty would have died, and for a very good reason; the oldest lion in the Tower, very much about the king's age, died a fortnight ago!'* A lion's death was considered a certain omen of the sovereign's approaching decease.

["Oh, the credulity of our ancestors!" cried Douglas. "But I remember to have heard a legend not unlike the Cœur-de-Lion story, in connection with Arundel Castle in Sussex. I have an uncle resident in that neighbourhood, whom I visited a twelvemonth ago, and then I paid a visit to the magnificent seat of the Howards.

"The Lord of Arundel, in the reign of Stephen, was a certain William de Albini.† In the old chronicles he is celebrated as William-with-the-Strong-Hand, in allusion to a deed of incredible daring.

"Once upon a time—"

"Bravo, Douglas; that's the very beginning or exordium," cried Seymour, "which commends itself to my fancy. *Once upon a time!* Oh, the words are like a magical spell, which opens up visions of wonderful enchanters—of gnomes, and

* Earl Stanhope, 'History of England from the Peace of Utrecht.'

† Tierney, 'History of Arundel;' Dr. Beattie, 'Castles and Abbeys of England.'

dwarfs, and princesses as bright as day, and princes as courteous as they are gallant; of blooming gardens, and haunted towers, and woods thick with shadows, and

'Magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn!'

"*Once upon a time!* What happy hours they recall to me; hours of marvel and enraptured mystery, when I have hung over the fascinating page, like the man of science over some new monstrosity, and forgotten the sights and sounds of the every-day world, for a world of dreams and delusion, created by the genius of the poet or the romancist!

'These wonders strange he sees, and many more,
Whose head is pregnant with poetic lore.'"

AN OLD LEGEND.

Once upon a time, then, the Queen of France, who was a widow, being enamoured of a gallant and comely knight of her own nation, and believing—as all ladies ought to believe of their lovers—that no one could rival him in manly sports and heroic deeds (and perceiving that if she could beguile the world to see him with *her* eyes, and to own him as a knight without compeer, then truly she might wed him without shame), ordained a grand tournament to be held at Paris, and proffered magnificent prizes to all who acquitted themselves in it with honour. Amongst the knights who hastened to this great festival of lances, was the gallant William de Albini, and there he comported himself so valiantly, and yet so modestly, that he attracted the attention of the queen. In those times, beauty was readily won by valour; and the queen, turning away contemptuously from her conquered lover, offered the Albini costly jewels, and, more precious than jewels, her royal hand. But he, being betrothed to Adeliza of England, rejected the lady's proffer, whereat she was grievously angered, and for which she resolved to be avenged.

So she persuaded him to accompany her into a certain garden, and led him into a cave where a fierce lion was kept, which she pretended to be desirous of showing to him. 'He is very fierce,' said she, tauntingly. 'Women, not men,' retorted the earl, 'may dread his temper.' Suddenly she closed the door upon him, and remorselessly left him to his death. But Albini, wrapping his cloak around his arm, went boldly up to the lion, thrust his hand into his mouth, and plucked out his tongue. Then, returning into the palace, he prevailed upon a maid of honour to present it to the baffled queen.

["That reminds me," said Seymour, "of a rather graceful anecdote which is told by an old chronicler,* and versified by a modern poet—I mean the Lady and the Glove. At a show of wild beasts before king Francis I. of France, a lady, in order to test the courage and devotion of her lover, flung her glove into the arena among the furious animals, and then commanded her knight to restore it to her. He coolly undertook the dangerous enterprise, and accomplished it safely, but he flung the glove in the lady's face on his return, and never spoke to her again. I will try to repeat some portions of the ballad which Schiller founded on this incident, and when we arrive at Firbank I will read it to you.

'THE GLOVE.

'Before his lion court,
To see the grisly sport,
Sate the king;
Beside him grouped his princely peers,
And dames aloft in circling tiers,
Wreathed round their blooming ring.
King Francis, where he sate,
Raised a finger—yawned the gate,
And, slow from his repose,
A *Lion* goes!

* Gaston de Foix, 'Essai sur Paris.'

* * * *

'A finger raised the king—
And nimbly have the guard
A second gate unbarred:
Forth, with a rushing spring,
A *Tiger* sprung!
Wildly the wild one yelled
When the lion he beheld;
And, bristling at the look,
With his tail his sides he struck,
And rolled his rabid tongue.

* * * *

The king raised his finger; then
Leaped two *Leopards* from the den
With a bound:
And boldly bounded they
Where the crouching tiger lay
Terrible!
And he griped the beasts in his deadly hold
In the grim embrace they grappled and rolled.
Rose the lion with a roar!
And stood the strife before;
And the wild-cats on the spot,
From the blood thirst, wroth and hot,
Halted still!

'From the gallery raised above,
A fair hand dropped a glove:—
Midway between the beasts of prey,
Lion and tiger; there it lay,
The winsome lady's glove!

'Fair Cunigonde said, with a lip of scorn,
To the knight Delorges, 'If the love you have sworn
Were as gallant and leal as you boast it to be,
I might ask you to bring back that glove to me!'

'The knight left the place where the lady sate;
The knight he has passed through the fearful gate;
The lion and tiger he stooped above,
And his fingers have closed on the lady's glove

'All shuddering and stunned, they beheld him there—
The noble knights and the ladies fair;

But loud was the joy and the praise the while
He bore back the glove with his tranquil smile!

'With a tender look in her softening eyes,
That promised reward to his warmest sighs,
Fair Cunigonde rose her knight to grace—
He tossed the glove in the lady's face!
'Nay, spare me the guerdon at least,' quoth he;
And he left for ever that fair ladye!'"*

"And served her right," cried Douglas; "not love, but cruel pride must have induced her to expose a gallant knight to almost certain destruction, for the purpose of showing her influence over him."

"Now then, Douglas," said Mountjoy, "you have a story to tell us."

"No; the adventure I was thinking of is described in the book already referred to by Fred Fisher—Dr. Livingstone's 'Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa,' which my uncle lent me to read during the holidays."

"Precious dry stuff, I should think," said Mountjoy.

"No, no, I assure you; it is as graphic and as absorbing as 'Robinson Crusoe,' and full of anecdotes of strange people, and descriptions of strange lands, to say nothing of accounts of wild animals, replete with exciting interest. It's a long time since I have read a book so jolly. But for my story, which I will try to remember as exactly as possible.]

THE MISSIONARY AND THE LION

In the country of the Bechuanas, and on the borders of the Kalahari Desert, lies a fair and leafy valley, rich in pasturage and good water, and distinguished by so much amenity that Dr. Livingstone gladly selected it as the site of a missionary station. The tribe inhabiting the valley are called

* 'Poems of Schiller,' translated by Lord Lytton. A version of this anecdote is also given by Leigh Hunt

the Bakátla, and they seem to be peaceful and industrious people, great in cattle-breeding, and solely occupied in pastoral pursuits.

At the time that Dr. Livingstone settled in the valley, the Bakátla were much harassed by lions, and these formidable animals had grown so bold that not only did they break into the cattle pens by night and destroy the cows, but they even ventured on their predatory excursions in the open day. And this was so unwonted an occurrence, that the Bakátla believed themselves bewitched—'given,' as they said, 'into the power of the lions by a neighbouring tribe.' They resolved upon a grand expedition against the lions, but being of a peaceful race returned home again without effecting any conquests.

Now, it appears to be a fact that when one in a troop of lions has been killed, the remainder quit the district, and betake themselves to some other locality. Consequently, when the natives summoned up courage for a new expedition, Dr. Livingstone accompanied them, that he might encourage them to release themselves from the annoyance by destroying one of the marauders.

After traversing the grassy dale for a short distance, they found the lions reposing under the shelter of a clump of trees on a gentle acclivity. Immediately they drew a circle around the hill, and gradually closed up as they drew nearer and nearer to its base.

Livingstone remained below on the level ground, in company with a native schoolmaster named Mebátive. Surveying the scene with eager eyes, he descried a lion recumbent on a mass of rock within the ring of natives. He pointed the animal out to Mebátive, who immediately fired, and the ball hit the rock on which the animal was sitting. He bit at the spot chipped by the ball just as a dog does at

a stick or stone flung at him, and then, with a leap and a bound, broke through the startled Bakátla, and escaped unhurt. The natives should have speared him as he attempted to get free, but trembled to attack him.

After a little delay the circle was reformed, and Dr. Livingstone saw two other lions within it, but was afraid to fire lest he should shoot any of the natives. The monsters dashed through the line, however, and the Bakátla again took to their heels in every direction. Our missionary, therefore, seeing that the men would not be induced to hold their ground, abandoned the enterprize, and began to retrace his route towards the village.

When winding round the spur of the hill, Dr. Livingstone saw a lion—probably one of the animals he had noticed before—crouching on a rock, about ten paces off, with a small thorny bush in front of him. The missionary took a steady aim at him, and fired both barrels right through the bush—bang! bang!

The natives, excited and confused, exclaimed, 'He is shot! he is shot!' Others, hearing the second ball, and ignorant of the mysteries of a double-barrelled rifle, cried, 'He has been shot by another man too; let us go to him!' Seeing the lion's tail erected in anger, Livingstone called out, 'Stop a little till I load again.' While in the very act of ramming down the charge, he heard a loud and sudden shout, and looking half round, lo, the lion was in the act of springing upon him! He seized Dr. Livingstone by the shoulder, and both went to the ground together.

The lion growled most horribly, and shook his intended victim as a terrier shakes a rat. Yet, strange to say, Dr. Livingstone's feelings at this awful moment were not what you would suppose. His thoughts neither reverted to the past nor to the future; of his present peril he took no heed,

for the shock had thrown him into a state of stupor. It was as if a dream had overmastered him ; and though quite conscious of all that happened, he felt neither pain nor terror—just as patients under the influence of chloroform see the operation but do not feel the quick agony of the knife. This semi-comatose condition—this placid indifference —or whatever you like to call it—is probably experienced by all animals who fall victims to the carnivora, and was mercifully intended by their Creator to lessen the pain of death.

Dr. Livingstone, however, was happily rescued from his formidable antagonist. Mebátive, who was standing at a distance of ten or fifteen yards, discharged both barrels at the lion, but his gun missed fire, and the animal, releasing his grasp of the missionary, turned to attack his new foe. Another native made a bold attempt to spear the monster, who, roaring and champing, and infuriated by the number of his enemies, suddenly sprung upon him and seized him by the shoulder. It was his last dying effort, for a moment afterwards the balls he had received took effect upon him, and he fell dead.

Thus singularly was Dr. Livingstone saved from what seemed certain death. And this is my story of the Missionary and the Lion.

["A very good story, too," said Seymour. "That missionary was a man of true courage; and not one of your pretentious heroes who can do nothing except to the sound of drums and trumpets."

"And now," continued Fisher, "I will take up the ball, and tell you of a remarkable adventure recorded by another African traveller."]

A SCENE IN KAFFIR-LAND.

We were waked up suddenly, this intrepid sportsman

remarks,* by hearing one of the oxen bellowing and the dogs barking. It was moderately dark, and I seized Clifton's double rifle and rushed out, not knowing where, when I saw the driver perched on the top of a temporary hut made of grass, about six feet high, and roaring lustily for a doppé (cap). I scrambled up just as the poor ox ceased his cries, and heard the lions growling and roaring on the top of him not more than fourteen yards from where we were, but it was too dark to see them. I fired, however, in the direction of the sound and just above the body of the ox, which I could distinguish tolerably well, as it was a black one. Diza, the driver, followed my example, and as the lions did not take the least notice, I fired my second barrel, and was just proceeding to load my own gun, which Jack had brought me, when I was aware for a single instant only that the lion was coming, and the same moment I was knocked half a dozen somersaults off the hut, the brute striking me in the chest with his head. I gathered myself up in a second, and made a dash at a fence just behind me, and scrambled through it, gun in hand, but the muzzle was choked with dirt. I then made for the waggon, and got on the box, where I found all the Kaffirs, who could not get inside, sticking like monkeys, and Diza perched on the top. How he got there seemed to me a miracle, as he was alongside me when the brute charged. A minute or two afterwards one of them marched off a goat, one of five that were tethered by the foot to the hut which we had so speedily evacuated.

Diza, thinking he had a chance, fired from the top of the waggon, and the recoil knocked him backwards on to the tent, which broke his fall. It was a most ludicrous sight altogether.

* W. C. Baldwin, 'African Hunting,' pp. 46–50.

After that we were utterly defeated, and the brutes were allowed to eat their meal unmolested, which they continued to do for some time, growling fiercely all the while. The Kaffirs said there were five in all. I fired once again, but without effect; and we all sat shivering with cold, without any clothes on, till nearly daybreak, when our enemies beat a retreat, and I was not sorry to turn in again between the blankets. I was just beginning to get warm again when I was aroused by a houble shot, and rushed out on hearing that the driver and after-driver had shot the lion. We went to the spot and found a fine lioness dead, with a bullet through the ribs from the after-rider—a good shot, as she was at least 150 yards off. Another had entered the neck just behind the head, and travelled all along the spine nearly to the root of the tail. I claimed that shot, and forthwith proceeded to skin her. I cut out the ball. It proved to be my shot out of Clifton's rifle; this accounted for her ferócious onslaught. The after-rider was rather chopfallen at having to give her up to the rightful owner.

Diza got a claw in his thigh, and the gun which he had in his hand wás frightfully scratched on the stock—rather sharp practice. A strong-nerved Kaffir woman lay in the hut the whole time, without a door or anything whatever between her and the lions, and kept as still as a mouse all the while.

I had the remains of the ox dragged to the best spot for getting a shot, if the lions should pay us another visit. They did not keep us waiting long. In less than an hour after dark they came, and immediately began their meal. The night was very dark, and we had nothing but their own growls to guide us in shooting. We three blazed away in succession for a long time. The ox was placed just in front

of the waggon, about twenty-five yards off, but they dragged it away considerably further. Crafty must have had some narrow escapes, for she would not come in, but kept up an incessant clamour all the time; and, encouraged by the firing, came to very close quarters several times. They charged her frequently and savagely, but she showed great pluck. I saw one lion tolerably distinctly once, and fired, when, for the first time, he uttered a fierce roar, and charged straight at the waggon. We had, however, a strong fence between the waggon and them, and when the lion lay down about seven yards off—for a considerable period—I felt certain he was wounded. He made off soon afterwards, and I turned in before they all took their departure.

[Here Fisher closed the volume; his narrative was not greeted with any very warm applause.

"That is tolerable in its way," said the Fat Boy, with an air of critical severity; "but I don't call it exciting. The lion don't seem to have been a formidable chap, and Baldwin ought to have shot him. Come now, let us have a real stirring, horrible story."

"Something, I suppose," said Douglas, "that will thrill you with nervous palpitations, and make your hair stand on end—eh, Lambert?"

"What a dreadful ghoul he is, to be sure," continued Vernon; "he had better devote his leisure to the perusal of the 'Life of Captain Kidd,' or 'The Newgate Calendar,' or 'Four-Fingered Jack!'"

"Or Edgar Allan Poe's 'Tales of Mystery,'" said Seymour; "they are horrible enough in all conscience, though they have the merit of eloquent language and careful construction. But all such books are bad for young minds like yours. Never give way to a depraved taste in reading, or you will vitiate your judgment and corrupt your intellect. Now

here is a book, which, though replete with romantic incidents, contains nothing base or degrading."

And Seymour extracted a couple of small volumes from one of the pockets of his greatcoat, their appearance exciting the intense curiosity of his comrades.

"I hold in my hand," said he, "the narrative of a great lion hunter—a Scotch Nimrod, yclept Roulaeyn Gordon Cumming—which records his marvellous exploits in the wildernesses of South Africa.* I intend it as a contribution to our school library, and I fancy it will be eagerly devoured. But as our present subject of conversation is fully illustrated in Mr. Gordon Cumming's book, and he has accumulated many interesting details respecting it, what do you say, boys, to my dipping at once into its pages, and culling therefrom an anecdote or two?"

"Bravo!" exclaimed Douglas; "we are all agreed, and give us a good lion hunt, if you can."

"First," replied Seymour, "I would like to read you the author's account of the habits and appearance of the lion, as it differs from Dr. Livingstone's in some not unimportant particulars. And I must say, at the outset, that if Gordon Cumming colours too vividly his description of the king of animals, Dr. Livingstone, in my humble opinion, somewhat treasonably exaggerates in depreciation. I expect the lion is a little less magnificent than the one, and a little more formidable than the other, paints him."]

THE AFRICAN LION.

There is something so noble and imposing, observes Mr. Cumming, in the presence of the lion, when seen walking with dignified self-possession, free and undaunted, on his

* R. Gordon Cumming, 'Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa.'

THE AFRICAN LION.

native soil, that no description can convey an adequate idea of his striking appearance. The lion is exquisitely formed by nature for the predatory habits which he is destined to pursue. Combining in comparatively small compass the qualities of power and agility, he is enabled, by means of the tremendous machinery with which Nature has gifted him, easily to overcome and destroy almost every beast of the forest, however his superior in weight and stature.

Though considerably under four feet in height, he has

little difficulty in dashing to the ground and overcoming the lofty and apparently powerful giraffe, whose stately head towers like a pillar among the trees of the forest, and whose skin is nearly an inch in thickness.

The lion is the constant attendant of the vast herds of buffaloes which frequent the interminable forests of the interior; and a full-grown one, so long as his teeth are unbroken, generally proves a match for an old bull-buffalo,* which, in size and strength, greatly surpasses the most powerful breed of English cattle. He also preys on all the larger varieties of the graceful antelope, and on both varieties of the gnu.

["What is the gnu?" inquired Douglas.

"A species of antelope (*Bosclaphus gnu*)," replied Fisher, "though in appearance a combination of the horse and the bull. It has the body, crupper, flowing mane, and tail of the former; but its head is crowned with horns, like the latter, and the legs are as lithe and slender as those of a stag. It is peculiar to South Africa."]

Seymour resumed his readings:—Lions do not refuse, as has been asserted, to feast upon the venison that they have not themselves killed. I have repeatedly discovered lions of all ages which had taken possession of, and were feasting upon, the carcases of various game quadrupeds which had fallen before my rifle. The jackal, I may remark, (said Seymour,) is called the 'Lion's Provider.' It goes in great troops to hunt down its prey, and by its yells and clamour attract the lion, which falls at once on the hapless deer or antelope, satisfies its hunger, and leaves only the fragments of the repast for the jackal.

Mr. Cumming continues: The lion is very generally dif-

* The reader may amuse (and instruct) himself by carefully comparing Mr. Cumming's account with Dr. Livingstone's.

fused through the wilder regions of South Africa, but is nowhere met with in great abundance. The hunter seldom meets with more than two or three families of lions frequenting the same district, and drinking at the same fountain. Whenever our Nimrod met with a greater number, he remarked that the occurrence was due to long-protracted droughts, which, by drying up nearly all the springs, had compelled the wild beasts of various districts to congregate at the remaining fountains, and the lions, according to custom, had followed in their track.

It appears to be no uncommon event to come upon a full-grown lion and lioness, associating with three or four large young ones, which have nearly arrived at maturity. At other times, adult lions—if I may use the expression—are found hunting and consorting together in a laudable state of friendship; two, three, and even four full-grown lions roaming in company through the wild karoos, and over the arid plains of Southern Africa.

And now for a presentment of this noble animal, as sketched by one who had such excellent opportunities of noting his general appearance.

The male lion is handsomely adorned with a long, thick, shaggy mane, which, in some instances, like Berenice's hair, almost sweeps the ground. Its colour varies with different animals; in some, it is very dark; and in others, of a bright golden yellow. This circumstance has originated a prevailing opinion among the Boers—the Cape colonists, that is, of Dutch descent—that two distinct varieties of lions exist, which they distinguish by the respective names of 'Schwart fore lip,' and 'Chiel fore lip.' Such an idea, however, is wholly without foundation.

The colour of the lion's mane is, in fact, dependent upon his age. He is three years old when it first develops itself;

it is darkest when the king of animals has attained the prime of life; and when he has numbered many years, though still in the full enjoyment of his physical strength, it assumes a yellowish-gray colour; or, rather, that peculiar hue which we call 'pepper and salt.'

It is this old, or, shall we say, *mature* animal, which the hunter has most reason to dread, for he is dangerous from his bodily power and great craft.

The female lions are without manes, but covered over the whole body with a short, thick, glossy coat of tawny hair. The manes and coats of lions frequenting open and treeless districts, such as the borders of the great Kalahári Desert, are thicker and more handsome than those of animals confined to the forest-land.

The lioness, as I think we have already remarked (continued Seymour), is very fierce when deprived of her young; maternal affection stimulates her natural ferocity. To this fact Byron alludes in the lines—

> 'Go, when the hunter's hand hath wrung
> From forest cave her shrieking young,
> And calm the lonely lioness;'*

which, you see, he evidently means would be an impossible task.

["But what about the lion's roar?" inquired Vernon. "Does not Cumming refer to it?"

"Yes; and this is what in effect he says," replied Seymour; "and you will observe that it differs greatly from Dr. Livingstone's observations :—

"'It is extremely grand,' saith our author, 'and peculiarly striking. On most occasions it consists of a low deep moaning, repeated five or six times in rapid succession, each in-

* Byron's Poetical Works—'The Giaour.'

creasing in loudness up to the third or fourth, and thereafter dying away in low muffled sounds, very much resembling distant thunder. At times, and not unfrequently, a troop may be heard roaring in concert—one assuming the lead, and the others regularly taking up their parts like persons singing a glee.'"

"Oh, come, Seymour," exclaimed Beauchamp. "Does Mr. Cumming really state that as a fact? Lions practising part-singing! It sounds rather strange."

"'I know not if the tale be true;
As told to me I tell it you,'"

exclaimed Seymour, laughingly; and then continued:—]

Like the stags of Scotland at the rutting season, they roar loudest in cold and frosty nights; but on no occasion are their voices to be heard in such perfection, or with such a display of intense power, as when two or three strange troops of lions approach a fountain to drink at the same time. When this occurs, every member of each troop rings out a bold war-note of defiance at the adverse parties. The signal given, all roar together, and each seems to vie with his companions in the depth and loudness of his voice. The power and grandeur of these nocturnal forest-concerts is inconceivably striking, and always delights the hunter's ear, though I confess, (said Seymour,) that, for myself, 'distance would lend enchantment' to the sound.

The effect, remarks Mr. Cumming—with whose language I am taking considerable liberties—is greatly enhanced when the auditor happens to be situated in the deep recesses of the forest, all alone, and lurking, mayhap, within a score of yards of the fountain whose bright cool waters have tempted the lions thitherward. Can you not conceive the scene, boys? The thick rank African forest intruding

far upon the open plain; the moon in unclouded glory pouring her full beams upon a sheltered dell, situated just at the verge of the wooded ground; amongst the brake lying concealed the daring hunter, with his hand upon his ready rifle; and across the wild, in different directions, the troops of lions hurrying, and pelting, and galloping, with manes tossing in the wind, and loud roars like a mighty thunder, which seemed to rend the welkin, and drown the murmur of the spring, slow-bubbling up in the shadow of the trees.

As a general rule, lions roar during the night; their sighing moans commencing as the evening shadows begin to gather round the forest, and continuing, with intervals, until the day dawns. In distant and secluded regions, however, Mr. Cumming constantly heard them roaring loudly as late as nine and ten o'clock on a bright summer morning. In hazy and rainy weather they may be heard at every hour in the day, but their roar is more subdued. It frequently happens that when two lions meet at a fountain, a terrific combat ensues, as they say in melo-dramatic spectacles, and not seldom terminates in the death of one of the antagonists. A grand spectacle it must be, I take it—the dash and snort, the grapple and the struggle, of two furious lions. I wonder none of our painters has ever attempted to realize it on canvas.

The habits of the lion are strictly nocturnal. During the day he conceals himself beneath the shade of some low bushy tree or wide-spreading bush, either in the recesses of the level forest or on the mountain-side. He is also partial to the shelter of lofty reeds, or fields of long, rank, yellow grass, such as occur in low-lying valleys. From these haunts he sallies forth, when the sun goes down, to commence his nightly prowl. When successful in the chase, and his prey secured, he retires to his lair; and so great is his satisfac-

tion, that for that night he ceases to roar, unless aroused by an intruder, and only utters occasionally a few low moans.

It is on a dark and stormy night that these animals are the most active, the most daring, and the most presumptuous. Consequently, on such occasions, the traveller should be doubly on his guard. Mr. Cumming noticed a fact in reference to their hour of drinking, which he considers peculiar to themselves : they seemed unwilling, he observed, to visit the springs on a very clear moonlit night. If the moon rose early, they accordingly deferred their hour of watering until towards the gray and obscure dawn; if it rose late, they drank at a very early hour in the night.

Owing to the tawny hue of the lion's coat, he is completely invisible in the dark. Mr. Cumming says that he often heard them loudly lapping the water 'under his very nose,' and not twenty yards from him, yet could he not possibly discern so much as the outline of their forms. When a thirsty lion comes to the water, he stretches out his limbs, lies down on his breast to drink, and makes a loud lapping noise which no practised ear can mistake. He continues this process for a considerable period, pausing four or five times just to take breath. One thing conspicuous about him is his eyes, which, on a dark night, glow like balls of fire.

It appears, from our hunter's account, that the lion's natural affection is fully equal to that of the lioness. When the latter is attended by her young, her mate shows no symptom of fear, but, in the most intrepid manner, will face a hundred assailants.

["Such, then," remarked Seymour, "is Gordon Cumming's account of the habits and characteristics of the lion, differing not a little, I think, from Dr. Livingstone's soberer description."

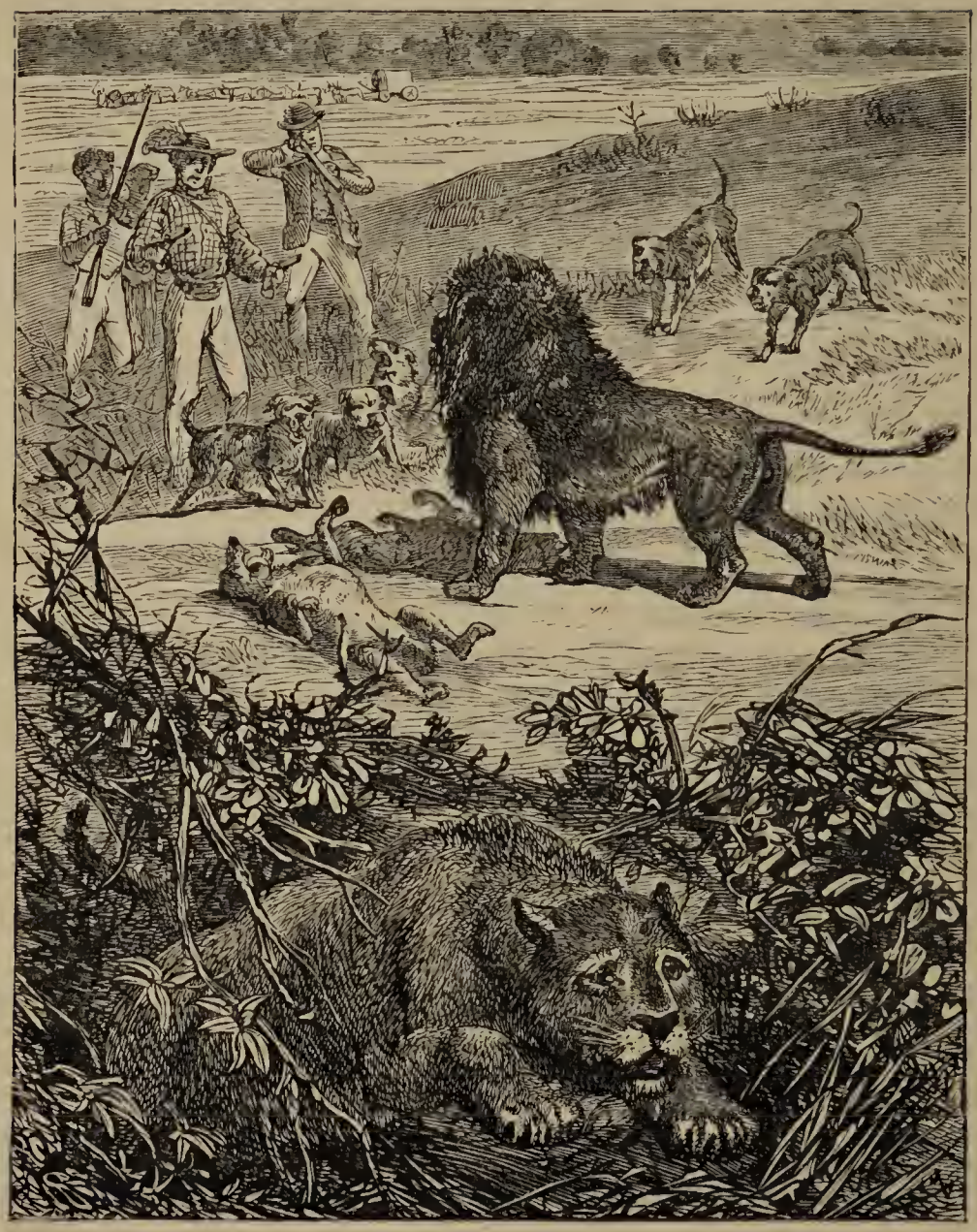
"It seems somewhat exaggerated," rejoined Fisher; "but,

on the whole, I suppose, its veracity cannot be questioned. No two people take exactly the same measure of a subject, or paint a picture from a precisely identical standpoint. According as the imagination and temperament of one writer differ from another, so will the view differ which he takes of any particular object."

"I say, Fisher," exclaimed Mountjoy, "suppose we drop the scientific. Does not this famous African hunter relate any hairbreadth escapes or striking adventure?"

"Ay," rejoined the Fat Boy—"adventure! That's the thing! These dull prosy lectures always make me sleepy; but when Seymour tells us a thrilling story, I seem to waken up *all over*."

"I can tell you an anecdote," said Douglas, "which has just occurred to me. Did you ever hear of Burchell, the South African traveller? Well, one day he was travelling with a caravan along the bank of a river which was densely fringed with tall grasses and mat-rushes, when his dogs began barking loudly at some concealed object. In a minute or two, roused by the tumult, a lion and lioness broke out into the open. The latter immediately took to flight among the reeds, but the lion, an enormous animal, with a full black mane, advanced a step or two, and then stood still, gazing calmly, as if to say, 'Who are ye that have dared to intrude on my royal privacy?' Some of the party were unarmed, and to them the lion's glowing eye was a thing of fear; others, who had weapons, put their fingers on the triggers, ready to fire; and Burchell himself held his pistols in the same manner. At this moment the dogs rushed forward and barked around him. Two of them ventured too near the destroyer, who slightly lifted his paw, and lo, they were dead! So quickly was it done, that Burchell had only time to mark the *result*. The men immediately fired. A



A REGAL ANIMAL.

ball entered the lion's side, but though the blood began to flow, he still preserved his attitude of half-scornful, half-curious immobility. They then expected that he would certainly spring, and Burchell raised his pistols; but, to their surprise, and not a little to their relief, he wheeled himself round, and grandly marched away."

"What a noble fellow!" cried Mountjoy.

"Ay," said Beauchamp, "he was truly a king among animals, and worthy of the regal title."

"Yes, if he quitted the battle-field," remarked Douglas, "in a fit of generosity, and not in a panic! But my anecdote was an interruption, and I now beg of Seymour to resume his readings."

"Well," said Seymour, "I will give you a 'thrilling' account of a life and death chase."]

A LIFE AND DEATH CHASE.

When hunting deer among the reedy marshes of the river Molopo, Mr. Cumming met with an adventure which seems worth relating. He suddenly observed two huge yellow lionesses, about a hundred and fifty yards to the left, walking along the border of the reeds, and in a direction parallel to his own. The reit-bucks which he was stalking smelt the lions and lay down. Our hunter got very near them, but they started off and bounded rapidly away; he fired, and missed the buck.

He then ran forward to a slight rise in the ground, from whence he could discern the course taken by the lionesses. In so doing he came suddenly upon them, and fired at the nearest, though having only one shot in his rifle. The ball told loudly, and the enraged lioness wheeled right round, and dashed towards him, lashing her tail, showing her teeth, and uttering that horrid murderous deep growl which indicates a lion's wrath. At the same moment her comrade, who seemed better to know that she was in the presence of man, made a hasty retreat into the reeds. The instant the lioness came on, Cumming stood up to his full height, holding his rifle, and his arms extended, and high above his head. The novel sight arrested her rapid onset; but on looking

round and missing her comrade she became still more exasperated, and made another forward movement, growling terribly. This was a moment of great danger. Cumming felt that his only chance of safety was extreme steadiness; so, standing motionless as a rock, with his eyes fixed firmly upon her, he called out in a clear commanding voice, 'Holloa! old girl, what's the hurry? take it easy—holloa! holloa!' Once more she halted, in apparent perplexity. Cumming, thinking 'discretion the better part of valour,' then concluded upon beating a retreat; retiring slowly, and talking to the lioness all the time. She seemed undecided as to her future movements, and was gazing after the hunter, and snuffing the ground, when he last beheld her.

["And now, if you are not tired—"

"No, no; go on, go on; fire away, Seymour."

"I will close my selections with a description of a more brilliant lion-hunt. That is to gratify *you*, friend Douglas."]

One of Cumming's attendants having reported to him the presence, in the vicinity of his encampment, of four majestic lions, our mighty hunter instantly prepared to do battle. For this purpose he saddled two horses, and directing his men to lead after him his small pack of dogs, rode gallantly forth. As soon as he gained the open ground, the four lions showed themselves on the river-bank, and, guessing that their first move would be a cowardly retreat, he determined so to ride that they should think he had not observed them, until he could cut them off from the river and the interminable forest beyond. That point being gained, he knew that they, still doubtful of his having observed them, would hold their ground on the river's bank until his dogs came up, when he would more advantageously deliver his attack.

He cantered along, as if he intended to pass their leonine

majesties at a distance of a quarter of a mile, until he was opposite to them, when he altered his course and drew a little nearer. The lions then showed symptoms of uneasiness; they sprang to their feet, and, surveying the hunter for half a minute, disappeared over the bank. They reappeared, however, directly afterwards, a little farther down; and finding that their position was bare and uncovered, walked majestically along the ridge of the bank to a spot, a few hundred yards lower down, where the trees and brushwood offered a secure concealment. Here they seemed half inclined to await the approach of their antagonist; two stretched out their massive fore-legs and lay down in the grass, and the other two sat up on their haunches like dogs. Deeming it probable that when the dogs came up, and he approached, they would still retreat and make a bolt across the open ground, Cumming directed his attendant Carey to ride forward and take post in the centre of the plain about four hundred yards in advance, thus compelling the lions either to give battle or swim the river, which latter alternative they are always unwilling to accept.

Now see our hunter, calmly seated in his saddle, awaiting the arrival of his dogs,—like Achilles before Troy, when he expects the advance of his Myrmidons—look out my allusion in the Iliad, boys, when you get to school—and while thus disengaged, bestowing a modicum of admiration on the majestic and truly appalling spectacle presented by the four lions. They were all full-grown males; and our hunter confesses that he felt a little nervous, and uncertain as to what might be the issue of the attack. The dogs coming up, he rode straight at the foe. The lions sprang to their feet, and trotted slowly down along the river-bank, once or twice halting and facing about for half a minute. Immediately below them the river took a

sudden bend, and formed a sort of peninsula. Into this bend they disappeared, and Cumming and the dogs were immediately in upon them. They had taken refuge in a dense leafy angle, thickly covered with trees and reeds. The dogs rushed into the covert undismayed, barking loudly, and provoking a terrible response in the roar of the lions, which wheeled about and charged them right up to the edge of the open ground. The next moment, they plunged into the river; whereupon our hunter sprang from his horse, and, running to the top of the bank, saw three of them ascending the other side, the dogs following. One of them bounded away across the open plain at full speed—I fancy I see him now, his tawny mane hovering like a cloud on his broad back, and his impatient feet spurning the dusty sward—but the other two, finding themselves pursued by the dogs, immediately turned to bay. It was now the hunter's turn to act, and firing at them coolly, right and left, he made the most glorious double shot that a sportsman could desire, disabling them both in the shoulder before they were even aware of his position. Then snatching another gun from Carey, who had just ridden up to his assistance, he finished the first lion with a shot near the heart, and brought the second to the ground by disabling him in his hind-quarters. He dragged himself into a thick dark-green bush, in whose shade it was for a long time impossible to obtain a glimpse of him. At length, a clod of earth falling near his hiding-place, he made a movement which revealed his position, and enabled Cumming to fire at him with fatal effect. The other lions escaped.

["Such is a lion-hunt, as it is sometimes carried on in the wilds of South Africa. And here I had intended to close my quotations, but as I see you are all interested," said Seymour, "I will make one more dip into Gordon Cumming's

pages, and tell you how the Man-Eater killed the poor Hottentot."]

THE MAN-EATER.

Cumming's attendants were chiefly Hottentots, and the whole party had encamped, one evening, on the bank of the river Mokojay, in the country of the Bakalahari. Cumming had drawn up his waggons as a sort of rampart against any wandering beasts of prey, and lighted a fire between the waggons and the water, close on the river's brink, under a dense grove of shady trees. The Hottentots kindled a fire for their own behoof about fifty yards from their leader's, and sheltered by a large thick bush.

The evening passed away quietly. Soon after dark the watchers could hear the sound of elephants breaking the trees in the forest across the river; and once or twice the hunter wandered some distance into the lonely darkness to stand and listen to them. Little did he dream that he was then exposing his life to imminent peril; little did he think that a ferocious man-eater lion was crouching close at hand, and only watching his opportunity to spring into the midst of the little troop, and carry off one of them to a most horrible death.

About three hours after sunset, he called to his men to take their supper, which was ready for them at his own fire; and after supper three of them returned before their comrades to their own fireside, and lay down; these were named John Stogolus, Hendrick, and Ruyter. In a few minutes an ox broke loose from the cattle-kraal, or fold, and walked round the back of it. Hendrick drove him in again, and then returned to his fireside, to continue his slumbers. On one side lay Hendrick and Ruyter under one blanket, and John Stogolus lay on the other.

Suddenly, says Mr. Cumming, the appalling roar of a

sanguinary lion burst upon my ear within a few yards of us, followed by the shrieking of the Hottentots. Again and again the murderous roar of attack was repeated. We heard John and Ruyter shriek, 'The lion! the lion!' Still, for a few moments, we thought he was but chasing one of the dogs round the kraal; but, the next instant, John Stogolus rushed into the midst of us, almost speechless with fear and terror, his eyes bursting from their sockets, and shrieked out, 'The lion! the lion! He has got Hendrick; he dragged him away from the fire beside me. I struck him with the burning brands upon his head, but he would not let go his hold. Hendrick is dead! Alas, Hendrick is dead! Let us take fire and seek him.' The rest of my people rushed about, shrieking and yelling as if they were mad. I was at once angry with them for their folly, and told them that if they did not stand still and keep quiet, the lion would have another of us; and that very likely there was a troop of them. I ordered the dogs, which were nearly all fast, to be made loose; and the fire to be increased as far as could be. I then shouted Hendrick's name, but all was still. I told my men that Hendrick was dead, and that a regiment of soldiers could not now help him; and, hunting my dogs forward, I had everything brought within the cattle-kraal, when we lighted our fire and closed the entrance as well as we could.

My terrified people, continues Mr. Gordon Cumming, sat round the fire with guns in their hands till the day broke, still fancying that every moment the lion would return and spring again into the midst of us. When the dogs were first let go, the stupid brutes, as dogs often prove when most required, instead of going at the lion, rushed fiercely on one another, and fought desperately for some minutes. After this they got his wind, and, going at him, disclosed to

us his position. They kept up a continued barking until the day dawned, the lion occasionally springing after them and driving them in upon the kraal. The horrible monster lay all night within forty yards of us, consuming the wretched man whom he had chosen for his prey. He had dragged him into a little hollow at the back of the thick bush beside which the fire was kindled, and there he remained till the day dawned, careless of our proximity.

It appeared that when the unfortunate Hendrick rose to drive in the ox, the lion had watched him to his fireside, and he had scarcely laid down when the brute sprang upon him and Ruyter (for both lay under one blanket) with his appalling murderous roar, and, roaring as he fell, grappled him with his fearful claws, and kept biting him on the breast and shoulder, all the while feeling for his neck; having got hold of which he at once dragged him away backwards round the bush into the dense shade.

As the lion lay upon the unfortunate man he faintly cried, 'Help me, help me! O God! men, help me!' After which the fearful beast got a hold of his prey, and then all was still, except that his comrades heard the bones of his neck cracking between the teeth of the lion. John Stogolus had lain with his back to the fire on the opposite side, but on hearing the lion he sprang up, and seizing a flaming brand, he had belaboured him on the head with the burning wood; but the brute did not take any notice of him. The Bushman had a narrow escape; he was not altogether scathless, the lion having inflicted two gashes in his seat with his claws.

The next morning, just as the day began to dawn, we heard the lion dragging something up the river-side under cover of the bank. We drove the cattle out of the kraal, and then proceeded to inspect the scene of the night's awful

tragedy. In the hollow where the lion had lain consuming his prey, we found one leg of the unfortunate Hendrick, bitten off below the knee, the shoe still on his foot; the grass and bushes were all stained with his blood, and fragments of his pea-coat lay around. Poor Hendrick! I knew the fragments of that old coat, and had often marked them hanging in the dense covers where the elephant had charged after my unfortunate rider. He was by far the best man I had about me—active, willing, obliging, fearless—and I was determined to avenge his death. So I ordered the steeds to be saddled, and went in search of the lion.

It is satisfactory to state, boys, that Mr. Cumming followed up the man-eater's track, overtook him before he could escape into the forest, sent a bullet through his shoulder, and 'finished' him with a second in his breast. Truly, a mighty Nimrod—a hunter among hunters—was Roulaeyn Gordon Cumming; and I recommend you, my boys, to read his book. Only, you will wish to be off to Africa, and follow the chase in its savage wilds.

'Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bushboy alone by my side:
O'er the brown karroo where the bleating cry
Of the springbok's fawn sounds plaintively.
Where the zebra wantonly tosses his mane,
In fields seldom freshened by moisture or rain;
And the stately koodoo exultingly bounds,
Undisturbed by the bay of the hunter's hounds;
And the timorous quagga's wild whistling neigh
Is heard by the brak fountain far away;
And the fleet-footed ostrich over the waste
Speeds like a horseman who travels in haste;
And the vulture in circles wheels high overhead,
Greedy to scent and to gorge on the dead;
And the grisly wolf, and the shrieking jackal,
Howl for their prey at the evening fall;
And the fiend-like laugh of hyenas grim,
Fearfully startles the twilight dim.' *

* Thomas Pringle, 'African Sketches'

["Capital, Seymour—well done, old fellow!" were the cries which rewarded him on the conclusion of his animated recitation—a recitation delivered with much energy and good taste. He acknowledged the plaudits of his admirers with a low bow. Fisher then observed that before they quitted the subject of the Lion he would read a few passages from a book which, he thought, would be quite new to his companions.

"You will all have heard," he continued, "of the Arab chieftain, Abd-el-Kader."

"I should think so," exclaimed Seymour; "who has not read the story of his heroic resistance to the French, his long-continued struggle for the independence of his people?"

"Well, I have here his quaint and original notes on the lions of Northern Africa, and the manner in which they are hunted, as recorded by General Daumas.* They will probably interest you."

"All that such a man can say," replied Douglas, "must be worthy of a hearing."]

THE ARABS ON THE LION.

The chase of the lion, he exclaims, is truly adapted to quicken man's intelligence, and to fire adventurous souls. Therefore, the Arab hunter loves to embark himself in it.

And the merit of the enterprise, he continues, is so much the greater, because, in Africa, the lion is a terrible creature; involved, as it were, in a mysterious atmosphere of legend and fable; his majesty augmented and protected by the credulity of superstition.

With that keen spirit of observation which is their peculiar characteristic, the Arabs have made upon this kingly animal a series of remarks not unworthy of being

* General Daumas, 'Les Chevaux du Sahara;' Paris, 1864.

collected and preserved, and which may usefully be contrasted with those of our European travellers.

During the day the lion seldom attacks man; ordinarily, if a traveller passes near him, he turns aside his head, and affects not to have perceived him. Nevertheless, if any rash braggart or silly coward, threading a thicket where he lies ensconced, suddenly exclaims, 'He is there (*ra hena*)!' the offended brute will immediately pounce upon the disturber of his repose.

With night, his humour completely changes. After sunset it is dangerous indeed to hazard yourself in any wild, wooded, and broken country, for it is there he lays his ambuscades, it is there you come upon him, blocking up the narrow pathways with his body.

Listen to some of the nocturnal dramas which, according to the Arabs, are constantly being enacted. If a solitary man, a courier, a traveller, or a letter-carrier, who chances to fall in with a lion, has a heart of pluck, he marches straight upon the animal, brandishing his sabre or his musket, but taking care not to fire the one, or to strike with the other. He confines himself to shouting: 'O thief! O robber! O highway-prowler! Son of a bad mother! Dost thou think I fear thee? Thou dost not know, then, that I am so-and-so, son of so-and-so! Rise, and let me go on my way.'

The lion waits until the man is close at hand; then he withdraws himself to a considerable distance. This is the first of a series of terrible tests which the traveller is compelled to undergo. Each time that he quits the path, the lion disappears, but only for a moment; he soon comes again upon the scene, and accompanies every manœuvre with a frightful noise. He breaks innumerable branches with his lashing tail; he roars, he growls, he groans, he jerks out his

breath in stormy gusts; he plays with the object of his multifold and fantastic attacks, whom he keeps constantly wavering between fear and hope, like a cat with a mouse. But so long as the traveller does not feel his courage—to use Bob Acres' expression—'ooze out of his palms,' so long as he maintains to the last a firm and courageous countenance, he will assuredly conquer, and be allowed to go on his way unharmed.

But if, on the contrary, the lion discovers that he has to deal with a coward, whose face is 'sicklied o'er' with the pale cast of fear, whose voice trembles, who dares not give utterance to a menace or a bravado, he redoubles his fearful stratagems in order to push his terror to the utmost. He approaches his victim, drives him with his shoulder out of the path, which he crosses and re-crosses every moment, and, in a word, plays him an infinity of tricks, until he inflicts the death-blow on the unfortunate.

Such, at least, is the Arab account. And though it is probably much exaggerated, yet we know that the ascendency of human courage over the lower orders of creation is an incontestable fact.

The Arabs have a story—I may call it, I think, a jest—that some of those desperate robbers who prowl about by night, armed to the teeth, instead of fearing the lion, salute him when they encounter him, with—'I am no business of thine. I am a thief like thyself; go on thy way, or, if thou wilt, let us rob in company.'

They pretend that this good understanding between lions and thieves is often exhibited in a very striking manner; that the robbers have been observed, when enjoying their repasts, to treat the lions like dogs, flinging to them, at a certain distance, the feet and entrails of the animals on which they are feeding.

Tales are told of the success with which Arab women have brought an intrepid face and brave heart to bear against the so-called king of the forest. They will pursue him when he seizes upon their sheep, and beating him lustily with a stick, make him drop his prey, exclaiming, 'Thief! Son of a thief!' He is then overcome with shame, and scuds away quickly, like a cowed hound. This last trait shows that the lion, among the Arabs, is a sort of nondescript creature—something between the man and the animal—a creature which, by virtue of its strength, seems to them endowed with peculiar intelligence. This opinion is confirmed by an Arab legend which is intended to explain why the lion suffers the sheep to escape him more easily than any other prey.

Enumerating one day all the things his strength permitted him to accomplish, the lion said:—

'*An cha Allah* (if it please God), I can lift the horse without trouble.

'*An cha Allah*, I can carry off when I will the heifer, and its weight will not hinder me from running.'

But when he came to the sheep, he thought it so infinitely beneath him, that he neglected his pious formula, *An cha Allah!* and Heaven condemned him, by way of punishment, never to be able to do more than *drag* it.

But I must now turn to Abd-el-Kader's description of the manner in which the Arabs conduct their chase of the lion.

HOW THE LION IS HUNTED BY THE ARABS.

When the king of beasts appears in a tribe, his presence is revealed by many natural signs. At first the very earth seems to tremble with the sound of his roaring. Then con-

tinual accidents and numerous mishaps occur. A heifer, a hen, are missing; perhaps a man suddenly disappears. Alarm then spreads through every tent; the women tremble for their children and their little property; lamentations arise on every side. The hunters issue a decree of death against the unwelcome intruder.

Proclamation is made in the public markets that on such a day and on such an hour, horsemen and foot-soldiers, all men who are able and willing, shall gather, with arms in their hands, at an appointed rendezvous.

The lion's lair is reconnoitred beforehand. The hunting-party sets out to beat it up, with the foot-soldiers in the van.

When within five hundred paces of the thicket where the enemy lies concealed, they halt, close up their ranks, and form into three lines; the second line holding themselves ready to fill the intervals of the first, if help be necessary; the third, compact, united, and containing the best shots, compose the reserve.

Now begins a strange spectacle: the men in the first line heap all sorts of taunts and insults upon the lion, and even fire a few shots into his ambush, to provoke him to a sally.

'There,' they cry, 'is the fellow who thinks himself brave; yet he dares not show himself before men! He is no lion, not he; he is nothing but a cowardly thief; may Heaven curse him!'

Considering that the proportion of numbers is often fifty or a hundred to one, I think the Arab reproaches are not very well founded!

Meanwhile, the lion, who can often be seen in his leafy asylum, glances tranquilly around, yawns, stretches himself, and appears wholly insensible to everything that transpires.

However, a few chance bullets strike him; then, magnificent in his audacity and his courage, he comes forth, and stands statue-like before the place of his retreat. All is silence. And now he roars; he rolls his flaming eyes; recoils; crouches; rises again; and crashes with his body and tail the branches and twigs surrounding him.

The front rank discharge their arms; the lion springs—to fall, generally, under the fire of the second rank, who have stepped into the open spaces between their comrades.

The moment is critical, for the lion only ceases the struggle when a ball has struck him in the brain or the heart. It is no unusual thing for him to prolong the combat with ten or a dozen bullets through his body, and the foot-soldiers seldom overcome him without having to mourn their dead and wounded.

The cavaliers who have accompanied the expedition are not called upon to act if the enemy does not quit the broken country; their share in the drama commences, when, as sometimes occur, he retires or is driven back into the plain or table-land. There a novel phase of the struggle begins, and one not without interest or originality. Each horseman, following the inspiration of his own courage, sets spurs to his horse, fires upon the lion, as at a target, from a short distance, and wheeling round, retires a few paces, while reloading his musket for another shot.

Attacked on every side, wounded every moment, the noble brute stubbornly faces about, rushes forward, flies, again returns to the attack, and only succumbs after a glorious struggle. A fatal termination is, however, a matter of certainty. Success against the Arab horsemen and horses is simply impossible. The lion makes but three terrible bounds; his running afterwards is wanting in agility. An ordinary horse distances him with ease; one

must have been an eye-witness of such a spectacle to conceive a true idea of it. Each cavalier utters a volley of imprecations; their shouts increase in number and fury; their pennons wave in the wind; the rattle of their firearms awakes the echoes; they gallop, they wheel, they dart hither and thither; the lion roars; the musket-balls whistle; it is a stirring and impressive picture!

But, despite of all this tumult, accidents are very rare. The hunters have nothing to fear but a fall, which may cast them under the claws of their enemy, or, a far more frequent misadventure, the ill-aimed bullet of a friend.

This, then, is the most picturesque, the most warlike form which the chase of the lion can assume. There are, however, other modes of hunting him, which may be regarded as more certain, and more quickly efficacious.

The Arabs have remarked that the day after he has made a sumptuous and ample banquet, the lion, under the tyranny of a difficult digestion, remains in his retreat, fatigued, asleep, incapable of motion. When any locality usually disturbed by his roar is for a whole night free from alarm, it is allowable to conclude that its terrible visitant is plunged in one of these somnolent excesses. Then some man, more daring and devoted than his fellows, will quietly follow up the track until he reaches the creature's lair, when he takes cool and careful aim, and slays him outright, by lodging a bullet between the eyes.

Several men now living are held in high honour among the Arabs for having performed this dangerous and hardy feat.

Various kinds of ambush are also employed against the lion. Thus, the Arabs dig on the animal's ordinary route a pit, which they cover with a thin layer of branches. He breaks with his weight this frail flooring, and finds himself caught in a trap.

At other times they excavate, near the corpse of a man or beast, a suitable recess, which they roof over with strong planks, leaving an aperture large enough to admit of the extrusion of a rifle-barrel. In this recess, or *melebda*, a hunter conceals himself, and at the moment that the lion pounces on the corpse, he takes careful aim, and fires. Often the lion, when not mortally wounded, throws himself on the *melebda*, breaks through its timbers, and devours the unfortunate marksman.

Finally, there are not wanting men who will undertake against this formidable animal an adventure so heroic and hazardous as to recall the glorious achievements of chivalric prowess. Let me tell you the story told by an Arab, named Si-Mohammed-Esnoussi, whose veracity is vouched by Abd-el-Kader. Or, rather, let Si-Mohammed tell it in his own words:—

'I mounted my gallant barb, and repaired to the forest, one night when the moon was shining with glorious lustre. I was then a capital shot; no bullet of mine ever missed its mark. I begun to wake the silence with my shouts: *Ataïah! Ataïah!* The lion issued forth, directed his march towards the quarter whence the cries proceeded, and immediately I fired upon him. It frequently happened that the same thicket was the resort of several lions, which all broke cover simultaneously. If one of these beasts attacked me in the rear, I turned my head, and aimed over the crupper of my horse; then, lest I should not have hit him, I started off at a gallop. If I was charged in front, I wheeled round my horse, and executed the same manœuvre.'

The Arabs affirm that this Mohammed-ben-Esnoussi had with his own hand slain nearly a hundred lions. What risks he must have incurred! How often he must have trembled on the very verge of death! More fortunate, how-

ever, than the great French lion-killer, Jules Gérard, he died, I believe, at a venerable old age, of natural decay.

Far more dangerous, however, than the chase of the lion himself, is the chase directed against the lion-whelps, and yet there are hardy spirits which do not fear to undertake this truly desperate and often fatal enterprise.

Every day the lion and his mate issue from their den, three or four hours after noon, to make a reconnaissance afar, with the view, no doubt, of procuring food for their family. You may see them on the heights examining the villages below, and noting the localities where the herds and flocks are kept; then they proceed upon their errand of destruction, breaking forth into horrible roars, which serve as a precious warning to the populations round about.

During their absence the hunter skilfully penetrates to their retreat, seizes the whelps, and carries them off; taking good heed to muzzle them carefully; for their cries would soon recall to the spot their parents, and then, woe to the unhappy hunter! After an achievement of this description it is necessary the whole neighbourhood should redouble their vigilance. For the next seven or eight days the infuriated beasts, deprived of their young, seem lost in a paroxysm of madness, and the boldest marksman would not dare to confront them.

According to our Arab authority, the flesh of the lion, though sometimes eaten, is not well-flavoured, but his skin is esteemed a costly gift; so costly, in fact, that it is reserved for sultans, for illustrious chiefs, for marabouts and priests of peculiar sanctity.

The Arabs believe that it is good to sleep upon a lion's hide; that it prevents the approach of evil spirits, wards off misfortune, and is a specific against many dangerous diseases.

The lion's claws, mounted in silver, are worn by women as an ornament; the skin of his forehead is a talisman which some individuals place upon their heads, as the North American Indians eat bear's flesh, to infuse into their natures the animal's audacity and energy.

To conclude: the chase of the lion is held in high repute by all the Arab tribes. Every combat with the majestic brute must take for its animating device or principle: *Die, or Kill.* The Arab proverb runs, 'He who kills, eats; and he who does not kill, is eaten.' And the laconic eulogium bestowed upon a man who has slain a lion, is: 'Celui-là, c'est lui' (*Hadak houa*), 'Look you, that is *He!*' As if no other He were worthy of mention when compared with a Lion-Slayer.

["So much, gentlemen," said Fisher, "for Abd-el-Kader's notes upon lions and lion-hunting. I trust you have found them interesting."

"If the old Arab chief," remarked Seymour, "owes nothing to the literary workmanship of General Daumas, it must be admitted that he possesses the faculty of animated and picturesque narration. But I imagine that some of his statements are coloured a little too vividly, though of their general accuracy there can be no doubt. At all events, we cannot but acknowledge their interest."

"Is Abd-el-Kader still living?" inquired Mountjoy.

"Yes; and supported by a pension which the French government allows him. He is now advanced in years, however, having been born, I believe, in 1807. His struggle against the French was gallantly maintained, but since his submission, he has shown an unbecoming readiness to flatter his conquerors. His full name, I may add, is El-Hadji-Abd-el-Kader-Ulid-Mahiddin."

The boys now came to the conclusion that they had

bestowed sufficient time and attention upon the Lion to satisfy even the claims of "majesty," and it was determined to choose another subject. The lots were drawn as before, and the animal next selected for discussion proved to be—The Bear. Whereupon Fisher resumed his prelections from his apparently inexhaustible manuscript volume.]

III.

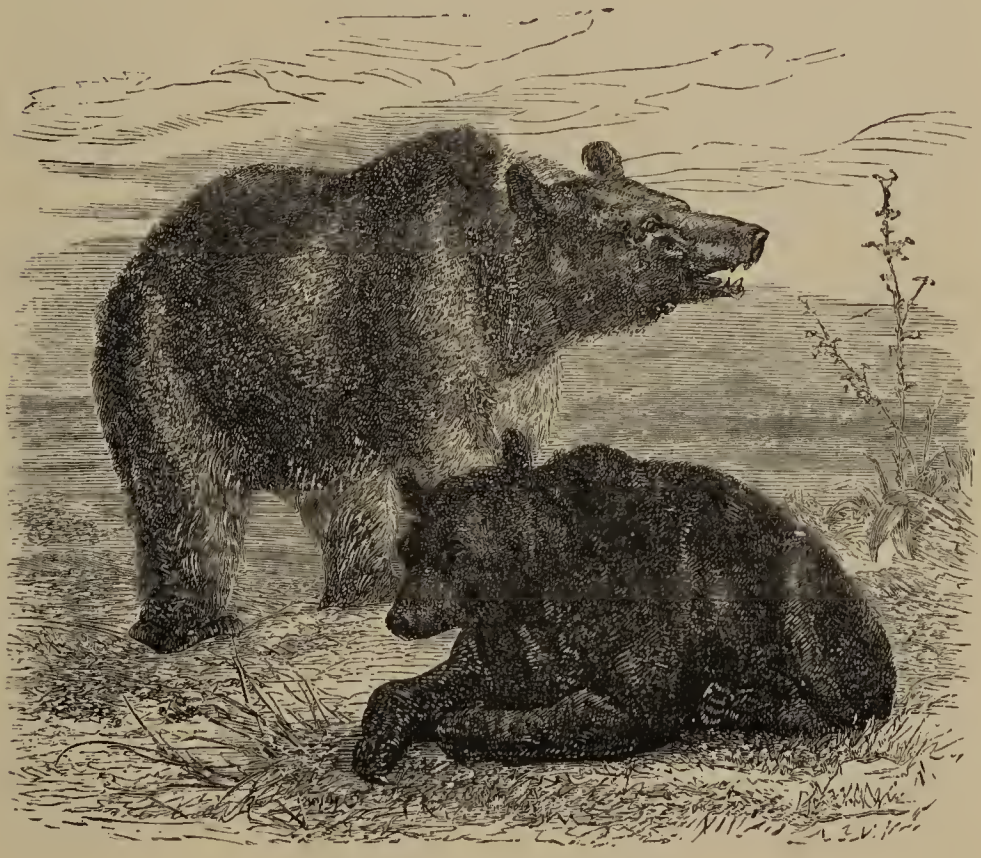
The Bear: His History and Habits.

STORIES OF THE BLACK BEAR, THE GRISLY BEAR, AND THE POLAR BEAR—THEIR AFFECTION FOR THEIR YOUNG—STRENGTH, FEROCITY, AND VORACITY—ANECDOTES.

THE Bear, (said Fisher,) is described by naturalists as belonging to a family of plantigrades, remarkable for their heavy gait, their massive limbs, and enormous bulk. Of all the carnivora he is the least dainty in his diet; and, though partial to all kinds of fish and flesh—walrus, seal, and whale; goat, sheep, and horse—he will live upon vegetables with as much apparent relish as the most enthusiastic vegetarian. It is seldom that the hungriest and fiercest of his tribe will attack man; but if induced to do so, by hunger, or in self-defence, they prove very dangerous antagonists. Each jaw is armed with six incisor and two canine teeth, with twelve molars in the upper and fourteen in the lower jaw. Their feet are pendactyle or five-toed, and provided with long claws, which, not being retractile, are better adapted for digging and climbing than for rending their prey.

The bear is not gregarious. He usually frequents the deep ravines and recesses of the mountains, remote caverns,

and trackless forests. During the winter he retires to some sequestered spot, and relapses into a condition of semi-torpidity. Though of a clumsy form he is a skilful climber, and ascends the trees in search of the wild bees' nests, for he is specially partial to honey. His flesh is wholesome; the fat white and sweet, and the hams, in America particularly, are esteemed an excellent dish for the table. I need not tell you of the many uses to which his skin is applied, nor detail upon the advantages of bear's grease to the 'curled darlings' of fashionable life.



BROWN AND BLACK BEARS.

There are several species of bears. In the northern parts of Europe and Asia it is the Brown Bear (*Ursus Arctos*) that is usually met with. His size on an average is about four feet in length, by about two and a half in height. His retreat,

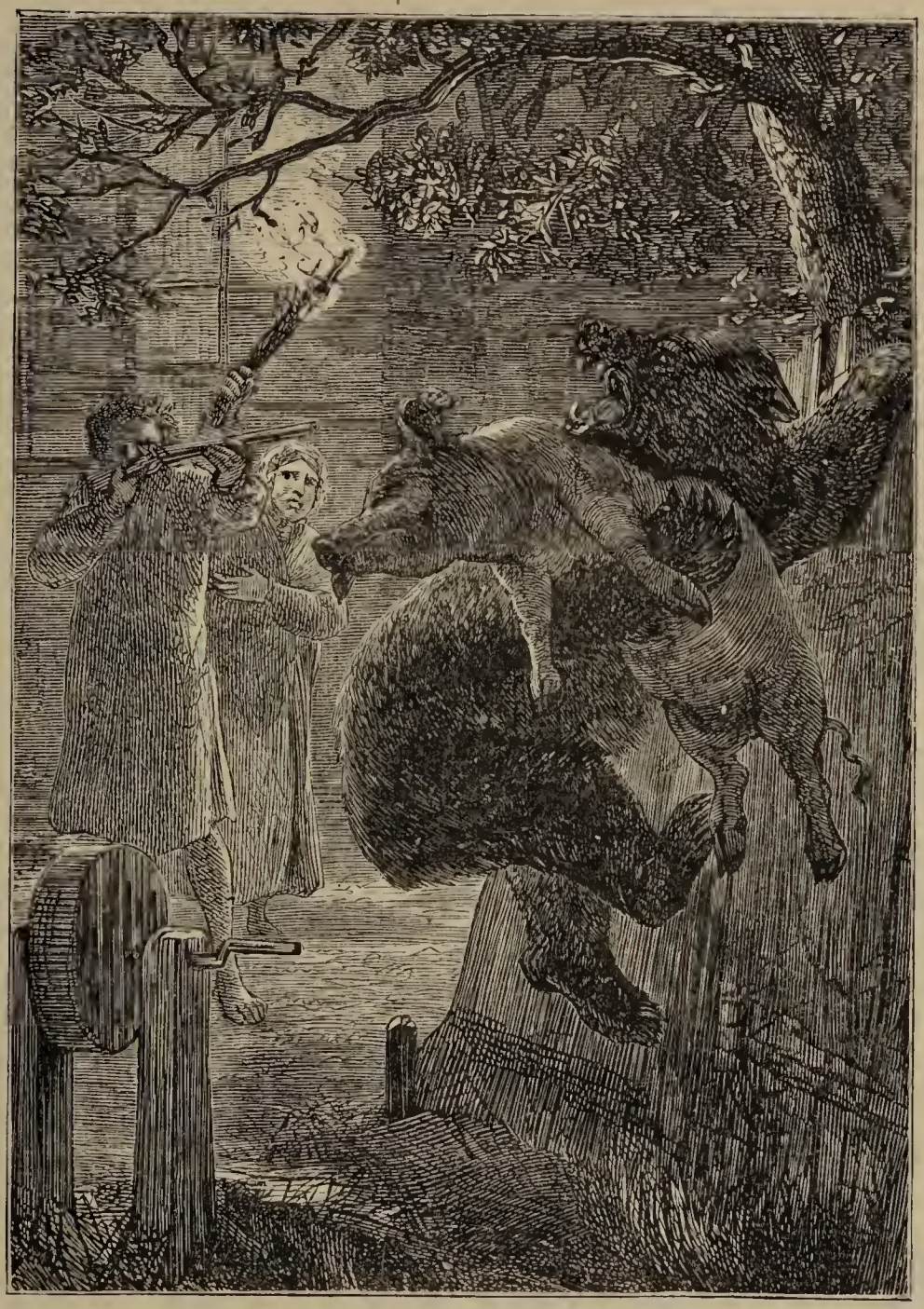
during the hybernating period, is the hollow of a tree, or some cavern ; but where such retreats are not easily obtainable, he will either excavate in the earth a suitable den, or construct a rude kind of hut with branches of trees, and line it with dry grass and moss. Thus protected, and sleek with his summer abundance, he will remain without further sustenance till the ensuing spring ; during which time the female generally gives birth to two cubs, that when first born are not much larger than puppies.

The American Black Bear (*Ursus Americanus*) is somewhat smaller than its European congener. He has a long head, pointed nose, small eyes, and short round ears ; his limbs are thick, strong, and clumsy; he has a short tail, large feet, and its limbs and body covered with black glossy hair. In all the northern parts of America the black bear abounds; and as he is by no means of a ferocious disposition, while his flesh is exceedingly delicate, he is not altogether an unwelcome guest.

'His chief food,' says an eminent naturalist,* 'seems to be of a vegetable nature—grain, fruits, and roots. He has an appetite for pork, however, and occasionally makes a visit to the farmer's hog-sty for the purpose of cultivating an acquaintance with the grunting inhabitants. Some years ago, one of our nearest neighbours was aroused in the night by a commotion in his hog-pen ; suspecting the cause, he jumped up immediately, took his gun, and saw a bear in the act of getting over the fence with a fine hog, embraced very lovingly in his fore-paws. The man fired (while his wife held a light), and killed the intruder.

'It is difficult to hunt a bear with any weapon but fire-arms ; he fights with his fore-paws like a cat ; and so watchful is he, and so expert at warding off every blow that

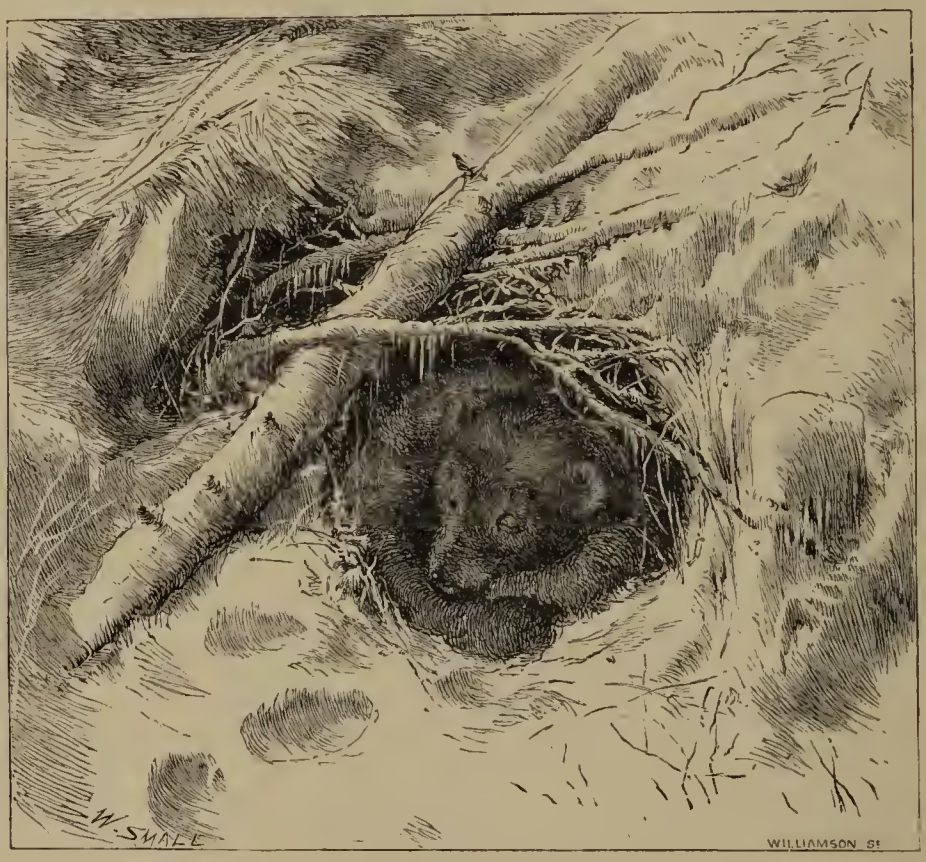
* P. H. Gosse, 'The Canadian Naturalist.'



THE BEAR IN THE HOG-PEN.

is made at him, that it is next to impossible to strike his head, the only part in which he is vulnerable; for you might almost as well batter a feather-bed as the body of a bear, so encased and shielded by an enormous layer of fat.

'In our climate he becomes torpid during winter, generally choosing for his hybernaculum, or winter-retreat, some large hollow log, or a cavity beneath the root of an overthrown tree. The species is numerous in all the wooded



IN WINTER QUARTERS.

parts of this continent, even to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. In the southern states he commits depredations on the farmer's fields of maize. When the corn is in that milky state called 'roasting ears'—so prized for boiling and eating as a table dish, like green peas, or roasting whole on the cob—the bear manifests a singular unity of taste with the farmer, and devours and treads down a large quantity, as he finds no difficulty in climbing over the zig-zag rail fence.

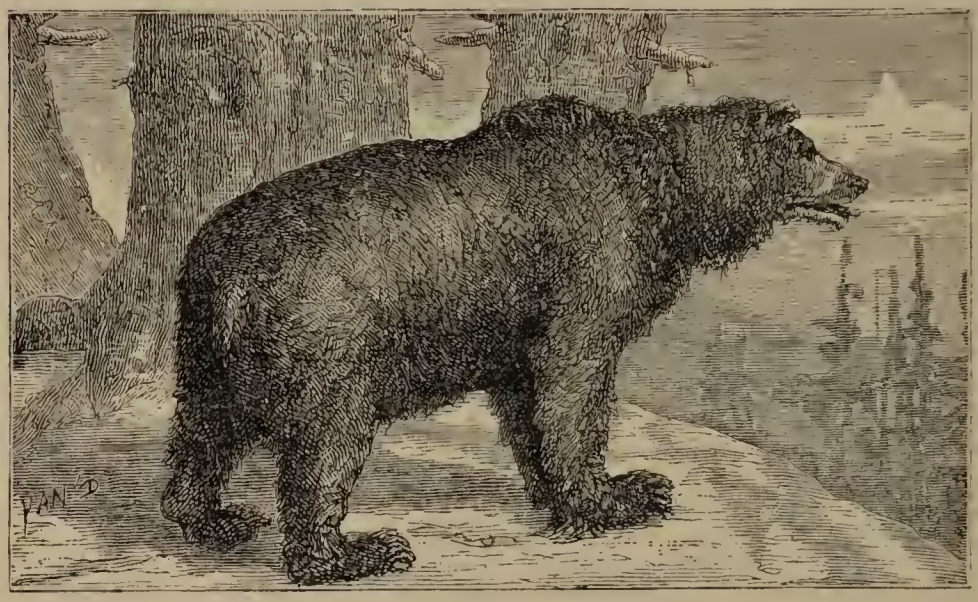
'I have been told that he repeats his nightly visit to the

same field; and, what is singular, always on such occasions, mounts the fence, night after night, at the same spot where he got over the first time. The planters take advantage of this regular habit, by fastening to the fence a heavily loaded gun, at such an angle that it shall point at the bear's breast as he rises on his hind legs. The identical crossing-place is easily known by his great tracks in the soft earth. A stick is attached to the trigger, and this is made fast, at right angles, to a transverse stick resting on two forks about breast high, a few inches outside the fence. The bear rears up to put his fore-paws on the rails, and in getting over, presses with his breast against the transverse stick, which drives back the trigger, and poor Bruin instantly receives the reward of his dishonesty.'

Another species is *Ursus ferox*—the Grisly Bear—of which we read so often in Cooper's American novels, and the numerous popular stories of adventure and enterprise in the Far West. He is about nine feet long, and though of immense strength and unwieldy figure, capable of great rapidity of motion. His claws are long and strong, but better fitted for digging and burrowing than climbing trees; the muzzle is long, flat, and narrow, the canine teeth resemble tusks; but the eyes are small, and deep sunken in the head. Mr. Drummond, when exploring the neighbourhood of the Rocky Mountains, frequently encountered this formidable animal. On such occasions he neither attempted to molest them, nor exhibited the slightest apprehension. The bear would then rear himself on his hind legs, attentively surveying the human stranger, and after a minute investigation, would suddenly wheel round, and gallop off. But had Mr. Drummond shown the least alarm, or made any effort to fly, he would assuredly have been torn in pieces.

The Grisly Bear has been found as far north as 61° N.

lat.; to the south his range extends to Mexico. His strength and savageness render him an object of terror, and even the huge American bison falls a victim to his prowess. The



THE GRISLY BEAR.

conqueror then drags his victim's enormous carcass, weighing about a thousand pounds, to a pit in some sequestered locality, dug for its reception, and thither he daily repairs to feast upon it, until the whole is consumed.

Mr. Bartlett records an encounter with one of these animals in the neighbourhood of the Buno Mountains.* He had ridden up to the top of a hill with two gentlemen, in order to obtain a better view of the country. While seated on a rock, he says, enjoying the prospect before them, they were startled by the appearance of a huge grisly bear, about fifteen rods distant, advancing in their direction. He discovered them at the same moment, and seemed quite as much alarmed, for he suddenly started off at full speed along the base of the hill. They ran for their arms, but before they could get them, the bear was too far off for a shot. He

* S. R. Bartlett, 'Explorations and Incidents in Texas, &c.'

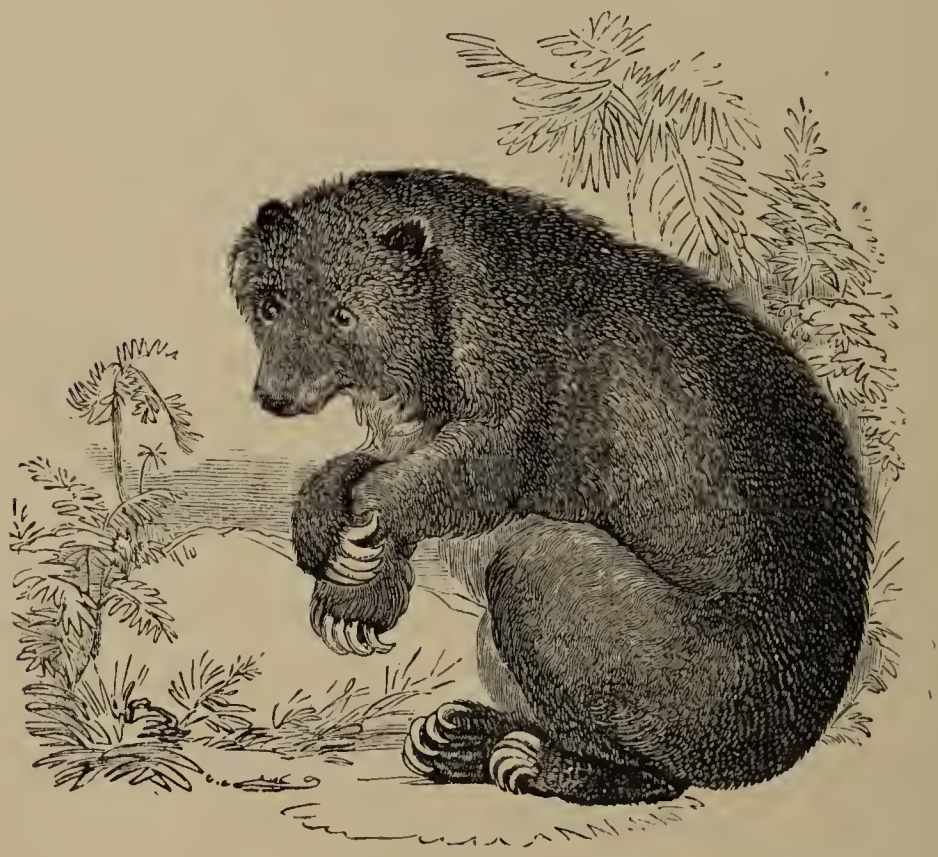
crossed directly in the rear of Mr. Bartlett's waggon-train, when he made for the hills, followed by several of the party. Coming to a steep ascent, he ran up it with as much ease apparently as he did over level ground, and soon disappeared. The bear has a great advantage over his pursuers in this respect, as his pliable feet and huge claws enable him to climb with the same facility as a cat.

The same authority relates a narrow escape which one of a party of emigrants, bound from Arkansas to California, had from a huge bear.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

It seems that as three of the men were exploring a wood which bordered on their route, one of them discovered the animal, and discharged his rifle at him. The bear limped off into an adjacent thicket; the emigrant followed; and as he approached the animal's place of concealment, the infuriated beast sprung forth and seized him. He was of course borne to the ground, when a desperate struggle for life ensued. The bear bit him severely in the leg; while the man, after a violent effort, succeeded in drawing forth his knife, and plunged it into the animal's body. The conflict was fought out on the brow of a steep hill, and near the brink of a precipice, some twenty feet in height. Over this, both combatants toppled, the bear fortunately being underneath, and falling on his back. This saved the man from injury, and released him from his antagonist's grapple. Lacerated as he was, he rose and prepared to resume the defensive, expecting the bear would return to the attack; but the bear had had enough of wounds and bruises, and, leisurely wheeling round, marched away. As soon as the emigrant could reach his companions, he despatched them in pursuit of his foe. They tracked him up, and killed him with a couple of well-directed shots.

Besides these species, there are the *Syrian Bear*, which chiefly feeds on vegetables; the *Tibet Bear*, also a vegetarian, and his general colour black; the *Nepaulese;* the *Malayan;* and the *Bornean Bear*. The *Malayan* is a native of Sumatra; vegetables constitute the staple of his food, he browses greedily on the young shoots of the cocoa-nut trees, and is much addicted to pilfering honey. The general colour of the species is jet black, with the muzzle of a yellowish tint, and when full grown, he measures about four and a half feet in length.



THE MALAYAN BEAR.

He seems capable of being domesticated. Sir Stamford Raffles, in his valuable and elaborate work, describes the manners of one which he had succeeded in taming.* 'He

* Sir Stamford Raffles, 'History of Java.'

lived,' he says, 'for two years in my possession. He was brought up in the nursery with the children, and when admitted to my table, as was frequently the case, gave a proof of his taste, by refusing to eat of any fruit but mangosteens, or to drink any wine but champagne. The only time I ever knew him to be out of humour, was on an occasion in which no champagne was forthcoming. He was naturally of an affectionate disposition, and it was never found necessary to chain or chastise him. It was usual for this bear, the cat, the dog, and a small blue mountain-bird, to mess together, and eat out of the same dish. His favourite play-fellow was the dog, whose teasing and worrying was always borne and returned with the utmost good humour and playfulness. As he grew up, he became a very powerful animal, and in his rambles in the garden would lay hold of the largest plantains, the stems of which he could scarcely embrace, and tear them up by the roots.'

The *Bornean* closely resembles the Malayan Bear in his general characteristics. He climbs with admirable skill, and is a formidable enemy to the cocoa-nut tree, from his partiality for its young shoots. He will also tear down the nuts, to obtain their milky contents.

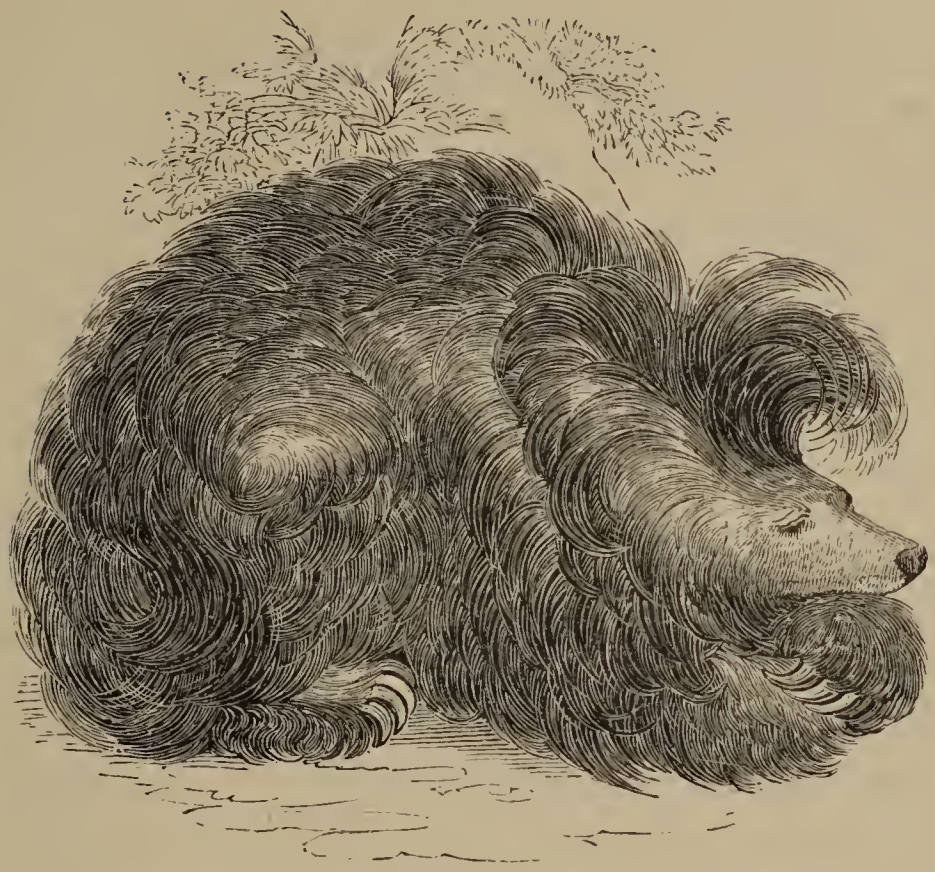
The *Bornean* or *Sun Bear*, as he is called, not only sits upon his haunches with ease, but can stand upright with little awkwardness. His senses of sight and smell are very acute. In captivity he is remarkable for vivacity and good temper, and solicits his food by various amusing gestures. If a fragment of bread or cake be held just out of his reach, he expands his nostrils, protrudes his upper lip, and often his tongue also, while with his paws he makes every possible effort to obtain the longed-for delicacy. Having obtained it, and filled his mouth, he places the remainder with remarkable coolness on his hinder paws, as if to prevent it

from being soiled by the floor, conveying it to his mouth in successive portions. He delights in being noticed, and caressed; responds readily to gentle treatment; but, if vexed or irritated, refuses all attentions so long as the offending cause remains in sight.

I have only now to notice, (continued Fisher,) the *Sloth Bear* or *Labiated Bear*, or Aswail (*Metursus* or *Prochiles labiatus*), the *Ours paresseux*, and *Ours jongleur* of French zoologists. This species has various synonyms: among others, *Bradypus pentadactylus*, *Bradypus Ursinus*, *Ursine Sloth*, and *Metursus*.

Bewick, in his quaint 'History of Quadrupeds,' was the first to describe and figure from life this uncouth and grotesque-looking animal. At first it was supposed to be a species of Sloth, but its true character was demonstrated by later naturalists. It is a native of the hilly regions of Hindustan, and was observed by Colonel Sykes as far south as the Deccan. It dwells in caves, and chiefly feeds upon honey, fruits, berries, and the termite ants, whose nests its claws are well adapted to demolish, but will regale on flesh when a victim falls within its reach. Its strength is equal to its ferocity, and it is regarded with terror by the Hindus. Captain Williamson, in his 'Oriental Field Sports,' relates several painful instances of the slow and deliberate tortures it inflicts upon its prey; for, instead of immediately destroying life, it sucks and chews a limb till it is reduced to a perfect pulp, while the rest of the victim writhes in vital agony.

In India, the Sloth Bear is frequently led about by jugglers and mountebanks, and is made to take a part in their fantastic performance. It seems to be very playful in captivity, but will pass whole hours in sleep, huddled up into a shapeless mass.



SLOTH BEAR OF INDIA.

"Now for a picture of this curious animal.* In form it is rough and clumsy, with short massive legs, like the pedestals of a balustrade, huge hooked claws, and a singularly flexible snout. In size it is nearly equal to the Brown Bear. Its strength is enormous, and though its pace is shuffling and awkward, it can overtake a man on foot, and ascend trees with facility. Its hair is long and shaggy, and on the upper part of the head and neck, where it sometimes exceeds twelve inches in length, separates into two portions, one of which overhangs the eyes, imparting a peculiarly heavy appearance to the animal's physiognomy, while the other, in a thick mane, droops over the shoulders. Black intermixed with brown is the general colour; the breast ex-

* E. Arnold, 'Deccan Notes.'

hibits a triangular or y-shaped patch of white. The head is carried low, the back is arched or humphed; the yellowish, dirty white muzzle is much elongated. The lips are singularly mobile, and project considerably in front of the jaws, while, at pleasure, the animal can protrude them in a tubular form far beyond the muzzle, so as to constitute an instrument of suction. The tongue is long, flat, and squared at the extremity.

Such are the characteristics of the various species of the bear. I have no doubt we shall find them forcibly illustrated in the different stories of adventure and peril that are about to be placed before us.

["How many species have you described, Fisher?" said Beauchamp. "Would you just repeat them for the benefit of my slippery memory?"

"There are one or two varieties which I did not think it necessary to mention; but if you want a complete list, write down the names—here is a lead pencil—from my dictation.

"Brown Bear (*Ursus Arctos*)—Varieties, the Pyrenean and Siberian; American Black Bear (*Ursus Americanus*), found in every wooded district of the American continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from Carolina to the shores of the Polar Sea; Spectacled Bear (*Ursus ornatus*), inhabits the Chilian Andes; Grisly Bear (*Ursus ferox*); Syrian Bear (*Ursus Syrianus*); Tibet Bear (*Ursus Thibetanus*); Isabella-coloured Bear (*Ursus Isabellinus*), a native of Nepaul; Malayan Bear (*Ursus Malayanus*); and Sloth or Labiated Bear (*Ursus labiatus*)."

"Why," said Beauchamp, "is the Malayan species called the Sun Bear?"

"Because," replied Fisher, "it is as fond of basking in the sun as the laziest tabby. The Malays themselves name it the *Bruang*. It is identical with the Bornean and the Japanese Bear."

"Is there no bear in Australia?" inquired Douglas.

"No; the animal sometimes so called is really a Marsupial —that is, carries its young in a sort of external pouch, like the kangaroo—the natives call it Koala, and the settlers occasionally dub it Monkey. Otherwise bears seem able to endure any extreme of climate; for they live in the torrid regions of India and the Indian Archipelago, are found over nearly the whole of America, and infest the ice-plains of the Polar Sea."

"Did you ever hear," said Seymour, "how the Swedes hunt this formidable animal?"

"The Swedish bear will be the common Brown Bear (*Ursus Arctos*) which abounds in Scandinavia and Siberia. In what manner he is pursued by the Norsemen I have failed to note, but you might favour us with your reminiscences, Seymour," rejoined the young zoologist. And Seymour began:—]

A SKALL IN SWEDEN.

As soon as a bear gets troublesome among the cattle of the Swedish peasants, a hunt is organized on a formidable scale, and due preparations made to capture the offender. A *skall* is formed—a skall being a cordon of armed men—who gradually surround the spot where the bear is supposed to lurk, and close in upon it until he is within range of musket shot. As the area to be enclosed is often of considerable extent, a skall will sometimes occupy eleven or twelve hundred men for four or five days before it is completed.

There are two kinds of skall, however: the *knapt skall*, which I have already described; and a *dref skall*, when a large tract of country is beaten up, so as to capture all the bears that may infest it.

Well, when a skall is necessary, the minister gives notice

of the fact after the Sunday sermon, and states the quota to be furnished by every village, and the hour, day, and place of the rendezvous. One man is supplied by every household, and the call is never disobeyed; the chief wealth of the Swedish peasantry being in their cattle, and every peasant being as liable to suffer from the depredations of the bears as his neighbour. And the announcement is made from the pulpit, because the Swedish law compels every person to attend divine service, unless prevented by illness or some equally serious cause.

On the appointed day the hunters collect at the rendezvous, armed with guns, spears, or pikes. The leader of the skall—always a person of influence, skill, and courage—then selects the most experienced marksman for special services, and arranges the others in orderly lines. A number is chalked on each man's hat, that he may know his proper place. After this, three skilful and intelligent hunters are appointed adjutants to convey the leader's commands; a skalljogden, or sergeant, is set over every ten men, to keep them in their posts and maintain discipline; and over every twenty a skalljogden major—a sort of colour-sergeant, or, perhaps, lieutenant. The men are next spread out at a distance of ten yards from each other, so that the skalljogdens have to keep watch over a hundred yards, no light task in a thickly-wooded country. But as the skall advances, and the circle contracts, the men, of course, are brought much closer together, and at last they drop into two lines, of which the gunners form the first and the spearmen the second.

Should any animal except a bear or a wolf appear, the first rank falls back, and the second receives the intruder on their spears.

The strictest order is preserved; not a sound can be heard; not even a dog is suffered to intrude within the skall.

It will sometimes happen that Bruin, roused close to the hunters, prepares for an attack, but they never give him time. 'On, Stanley, on—charge, Chester, charge!' is the watchword, and a shower of deadly bullets soon brings him to the ground. Ten men are thereupon told off to keep watch by the carcass until the skall is over; in other words, until no animal larger than a rat remains alive.

The great secret of a successful skall is to keep the cordon compact and close, as the bear, if he finds a gap in the line, will dash through and effect his escape. The hunters, moreover, are not such good shots as our volunteer rifles, and as Bruin can run at a hot pace, if pressed, he frequently foils his assailants. As a bear, what with his skin, and what with his fat, is worth nine, ten, or even twelve pounds, the Swedish peasants pursue the skall with considerable alacrity.

["I call that account of a skall very interesting," said Douglas; "I hope I shall not forget it."

"The Scandinavian hunter holds the bear in great respect," remarked Fisher; "he never names him in a direct manner, but calls him the disturber or devourer, and loads him with praises by way of propitiating him. This curious superstition obtains in North America, for an Indian never kills a bear without making a formal and elaborate apology, while he decorates the carcass with ornaments, and pronounces a complimentary funeral oration as long and as false as a Latin epitaph! In Labrador* the skulls of the slaughtered animals are suspended upon the trees, lest some indignity should be offered to so noble a portion of their noble selves. I remember to have read that, on one occasion, an Indian, seeing a partridge sweeping along the ground, hurriedly snatched one of these consecrated skulls and flung it at

* J. R. Hind, 'Explorations in Labrador.'

the bird. A 'medicine-man' thereupon predicted that, as a punishment for his sacrilege, the Indian would be bitten by one of the ursine race; a prophecy not unlikely to be fulfilled, as the man was a bear-hunter, and no particular date for the event was named. So it happened, a few days afterwards, while he was hunting, a bear rushed out upon him from his forest lair, and bit him so severely in the leg that he was nearly killed. You may imagine how the medicine-man glorified himself upon the extent of his prophetic powers!"]

When a bear is killed, (resumed Seymour,) the Indians make a grand banquet, and invite everybody in the neighbourhood to partake of it. I think they entertain an idea that the bear likes this kind of posthumous honour, and favours all who have regaled on his juicy flesh. I know they believe that he who partakes of it will be inspired with something of the living animal's strength and ferocity.

["What a thing it is," said the Fat Boy, meditatively, "to be so jolly fond of reading! Just see now, you two fellows, dux Fisher and poet Seymour, can tell us something new about all sorts of subjects. I think I shall take to reading myself."

"Bravo, Lambert," cried Mountjoy; "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest."

"There can be no doubt," replied Seymour, "that reading is a valuable part of a lad's education. One cannot make bricks without straw, and it is reading that supplies the straw. Never mind what may be the volume that falls within your reach—unless, of course, it is a *bad* book, immoral, or irreligious—for, as Pliny said, from every other kind of book you can derive *some* profit.

'I envy not the man of wealth,
The titled, or the rover,

Who waste the vital lamp of health,
And think they live in clover.
Let me, in some sequestered grove,
From vanity receding,
With one inspiring volume rove—
I'll solace find in reading!'"

"I think it is Lord Bacon who says, reading makes a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man,"* remarked Beauchamp, "and I suppose that all will admit a man's talents, however great they may be, require implements to work with, and material to employ. Reading is to the mind what manure is to a garden: it replenishes an exhausted soil, and provides for a succession of abundant crops."

"But reading," said Fisher, "must be methodical, and well-directed, to avail you anything. What is the use of flying from 'Robinson Crusoe' to 'Macaulay's History,' and 'Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress' to Milton's 'Paradise Lost?' That's the great fault of you boys; you jump from one subject to another, without rhyme or reason; play 'hopscotch,' as it were, with your studies, instead of adopting the good old maxim: 'do one thing at a time, and do that well.'"

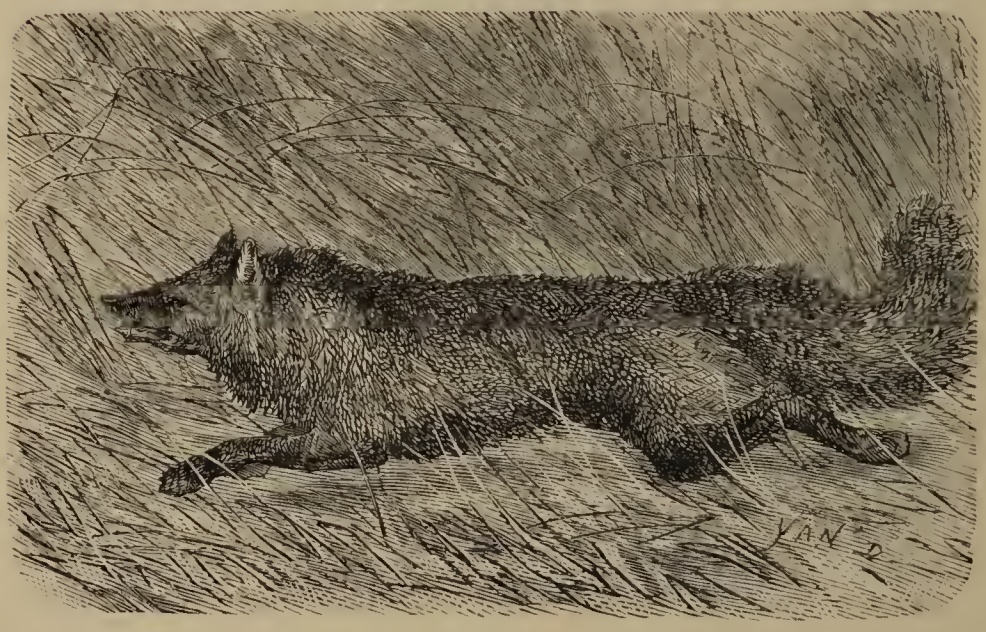
"Very well put, Fisher," observed Seymour; "Douglas, Mountjoy—you boys—

Remember good advice when freely given,
And so uphold the glory of the Seven!"

* For the benefit of my readers I give a further quotation from the "wide-browed Verulam"—"Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not anxiously (*i.e.*, attentively); and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books, else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy (or vapid) things."—*Lord Bacon*, 'Essays,' On Studies.

"Why, that's rhyme, Seymour," cried Vernon; "I declare you reel off verses as I do the line from my fishing-rod! But, come, Fisher; let us hear something more about the bears."]

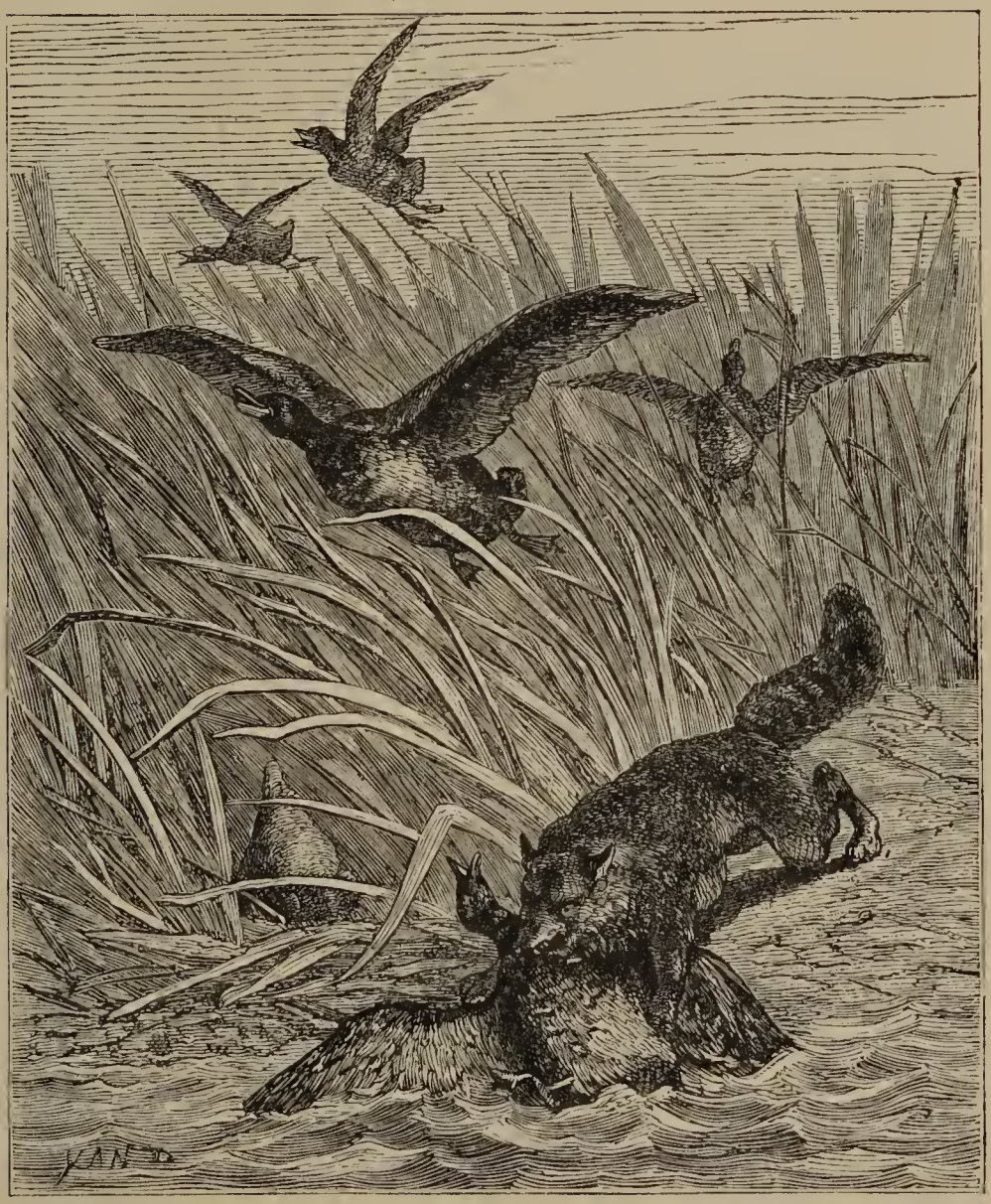
Connected with the great bear family—or *Ursidæ*—are various relations of more or less propinquity. Foremost among these, (said Fisher, turning to his inexhaustible manuscript,) is the Racoon (*Procyon lotor*), which the Germans call the Wash-Bear, from his habit of washing every article of food, clean or dirty, animal or vegetable, before he eats it.



THE RACOON.

To America and the West Indian Islands belongs this clever and crafty animal. Two varieties, the *Psora*, and the *Agouara*, or Crab-Eater, belong to Central America. Its average length is about two feet from the nose to the tail, and the tail measures about ten inches. Its head is not unlike that of the fox, the forehead being broad and the nose sharp. Its body is broad, with an arched back, and short dumpy legs. The tail is very closely covered with hair, and marked with several black rings on a yellowish-white ground. Its general colour, however is that of a grayish-brown, with a

dusky line running from the summit of the head down the middle of the face, and terminating below the eyes.



RACOON CATCHING A WILD DUCK.

In its wild state the racoon is of a somewhat savage character, and loves to prey upon birds, though, like the pole-cat, it eats only the head. It is partial also to eggs, the sugar-cane, and various kinds of fruit. It climbs with facility, and lives much among the trees, concealing itself

so perfectly that none but a practised hunter can detect it. When brought to bay, it fights desperately, but so numerous are its wiles and stratagems, that an experienced racoon will frequently throw the dogs off the scent, and effect its escape. Like the monkey, it is a destructive animal in captivity, tearing or biting to pieces every novel article which falls in its way, and examining each fragment with the air of a connoisseur. When domesticated, its lively ways prove a source of great amusement. It reverses its usual habits, sleeping during the night, and roaming about in the daytime, and appears to lose much of its sanguinary temper. When inclined to sleep, it rolls itself up into a kind of ball; in eating, it sits on its hind legs, and uses its fore-feet like a squirrel.

The Red or Rufous Coatimondi (*Nasua rufa*) also belongs to the bear family. It is a native of Tropical America, and resembles the racoon; but its neck and body are longer, its eyes smaller, and its long flexible snout so elongated that it well deserves its Latin appellation—Nasua, or 'Nosey.'

["Like Ovid the poet," said Seymour, "Ovidius *Naso*."

"Or the late Duke of Wellington," cried Douglas, "who was nicknamed—so I have heard—Old Nosey!"]

With this wonderful snout, the coatimondi roots up the earth in quest of earthworms and insects, but it is also a tree-climbing animal, and feeds upon birds, birds' eggs, and the smaller quadrupeds. Another variety of the coatimondi is called the *Narica* or *Quasje* (*Nasua Narica*), but its coat is brown, not red; it is easily tamed; and from its keen pursuit of rats and mice, well supplies the place of grimalkin in a household.

More interesting still, in its habits and structure, is the last member of the Ursidæ which I shall mention on this occasion—the Kinkajou.

["The what?" said Douglas.]

The KINKAJOU (*Cercoleptes caudivolvulus*) of South America, sometimes called the *Potto*, and, by Humboldt,

THE KINKAJOU.

the *Manaviri.* It is also called the Honey Bear, from its partiality for honey-combs, having, like so many of the Carnivora, a 'sweet-tooth.' It has a very long tail, prehensile at the end—

["Prehensile at the end!" exclaimed the Fat Boy; "what *does* that mean?"

"*Pre-hendo*, dunce," cried Seymour; "can't you construe a Latin verb! *Prehensile* means 'seizing,' 'grasping,' just as a monkey with its tail can lay hold of a branch, and swing to it—better than you could to a leaping-bar with your fat hands, young Lambert."]

The kinkajou would curl its tail round your neck, Lambert, with so firm a grasp, that you would be glad to call Seymour or me to release you from it. And as its habits are arboreal—that is, it lives in the woods and among the trees—this faculty is very useful to it. It is a small animal, about the size of a cat, though its thick fur makes it look larger; with bright quick eyes, a slender extensile tongue, and a short muzzle.

If we accompany Mr. Bates, the eminent naturalist, into an Amazonian forest, we shall have a good opportunity of watching this singular creature's habits.*

The Indians of the Amazons, he says, call it Jupurá, and look upon it as a kind of monkey. Some naturalists, however, consider it an intermediate form between the Lemur family of apes and the plantigrade Carnivora, or Bear family. 'It has decidedly no close relationship to either of the group of American monkeys, having six cutting teeth to each jaw, and long claws instead of nails, with extremities of the usual shape of paws instead of hands. Its muzzle is conical and pointed, like that of many lemurs of Madagascar; the expression of its countenance, and its habits and actions are also very similar to those of lemurs. Its tail is very flexible towards the tip, and is used to twine round branches in climbing. It is nocturnal in its habits, like the owl-faced monkeys, although, unlike them, it has a bright, dark eye.

* H. W. Bates, 'The Naturalist on the River Amazons.'

'I once saw it,' continues Mr. Bates, 'in considerable numbers, when on an excursion with an Indian companion along the low shores of the river Teffé, about twenty miles above Ega.

'We slept one night at the house of a native family living in the thick of the forest, where a festival was going on, and there being no room to hang our hammocks under shelter, on account of the number of visitors, we lay down on a mat in the open air, near a shed which stood in the midst of a grove of fruit trees and pupunha palms. Past midnight, when all became still, after the uproar of holiday-making, as I was listening to the dull, fawning sound made by the wings of impish hosts of vampire bats crowding round the cajú trees, a rustle commenced from the side of the woods, and a troop of slender, long-tailed animals were seen against the clear moonlight sky, taking flying leaps from branch to branch through the grove. Many of them stopped at the pupunha trees, and the hurstling, twittering, and screaming, with sounds of falling fruits, showed how they were employed. I thought, at first, they were Nyctipitheci—'

["Nyctipitheci, what are they?"]

Flying monkeys of nocturnal habits, peculiar to South America. 'I thought, at first, they were Nyctipitheci, but they proved to be Jupurás, for the owner of the house early next morning caught a young one, and gave it to me. I kept this as a pet animal for several weeks, feeding it on bananas and mandiora-meal mixed with treacle. It became tame in a very short time, allowing itself to be caressed, but making a distinction in the degree of confidence it showed between myself and strangers. My pet was unfortunately killed by a neighbour's dog, which entered the room where it was kept. The animal is so difficult to obtain alive, its place of retreat in the daytime not being

known to the natives, that I was unable to procure a second living specimen.'

One of these animals, that was tamed and lived at Paris, was very fond of attacking ducks and fowls, darting suddenly at them, and invariably seizing them under the wing.* Although it greedily lapped up the flowing blood, it apparently cared little for the flesh, and when the blood ceased to issue from the wound, left the body untouched. It preferred ducks to fowls, but could seldom indulge its predilection, for the kinkajou shuns the water, and the ducks were nearly always swimming in their pond.

Another kinkajou, which died at a venerable old age in the Zoological Gardens, was wont to solicit food by protruding its tongue between the bars of its cage, and when its wishes were complied with, would roll the end round the proffered morsel, and so draw it into its mouth. It loved to exhibit the prehensile power of its tail by clinging with it to the top of its cage, and then swinging to and fro, noticing those whom it knew, and seeking to beguile them into playing with it. It fed upon bread, fruit, and milk, and was very partial to sweetmeats and saccharine drinks. Here I conclude my lucubrations on the various species of the Ursidæ, but I have something to tell you respecting the bear in Ceylon.

Sir Emerson Tennent, in his valuable and entertaining work, informs us of a belief among the Singhalese—" †

["Who are they," said the Fat Boy, oblivious of lessons in geography painfully studied, but too readily forgotten.

"The inhabitants of Ceylon, to be sure," rejoined Mountjoy.]

—Of a belief among the Singhalese, (resumed Fisher,)

* Rev. J. G. Wood, 'Dict. of Nat. History;' the 'Zoological Gardens' (B. O. M.)

† Sir J. E. Tennent, 'Natural History of Ceylon.'

that certain charms are powerful to protect them from the violence of bears, and those whose avocations expose them to encounters with these animals are wont to carry a talisman about their persons, either attached to their neck or concealed among the folds of their abundant hair.

["Just as our forefathers in mediæval times," interrupted Seymour, "believed in spells, charms, and amulets which would defend them from every evil. I remember to have read of the Lee penny, a relic still in existence in the West of Scotland, and still held in veneration. Shall I tell you its story?"†

Encouraged by a general murmur of assent, Seymour continued:—]

STORY OF THE LEE PENNY.

In the reign of Robert the Bruce and his son David, there lived a gallant knight, named Sir Simon Lockhart of Lee. His valour and sagacity were so reputed, that he stood foremost among that brilliant band of Scottish chivalry who accompanied James, the Good Lord Douglas, on his expedition to the Holy Land, with the heart of Robert Bruce. Douglas, in his fiery haste to cross swords with the Infidels, entered into war with the Moors of Spain, and lost his life in the Peninsula. With those knights who had escaped the fate of their leader, Lockhart proceeded to the Holy Land, and fought for some time against the Saracens.

In the course of his stirring career he met, it is said, with the following adventure:—

Having captured in battle an Emir of considerable wealth and power, the prisoner's aged mother repaired to the Christian camp, that she might redeem her son from captivity. Lockhart named the amount of ransom which he

† Sir W. Scott, Introduction to 'The Talisman.'

was willing to accept, and the lady, pulling out a large purse, richly embroidered, proceeded to tell it down, like a mother who values money little in comparison with her son's freedom. While thus engaged she let fall a pebble inserted in a coin, and showed so much haste to recover it, that Sir Simon suspected its value was not to be measured by ordinary gold and silver. 'Add that amulet to the ransom,' said he, 'or I will not release your son.' The lady consented, and, moreover, explained its wonderful properties. The water in which it was dipped would check the flow of blood; if drank, would cure the most violent fevers; and possessed other valuable qualities as a medical talisman.

Sir Simon, after personal experience of all these wonders, brought back the amulet to his own country, and bequeathed it to his heirs, by whom, and by Clydesdale in general, it is known as the Lee penny.

[After the audience had testified their approval of Seymour's story, and the Fat Boy had denounced spells, amulets, talismans, and the like, as "bosh," in which he, for his own part, had not the slightest faith, Fisher resumed his reading:—]

An adventure which happened to a Moor at Amurajapoora in Ceylon, seems to prove, however, the singular inefficacy of the Singhalese talisman.

Desiring to change the position of a herd of deer, the Moorman—of course with his charm about him—was despatched across some swampy land to disturb them. As he was on his way, says the narrator of the incident, we saw him suddenly turn from an old tree, and run back with all speed, his hair becoming unbound, and with his clothes,—

'Streaming like a meteor in the troubled air.'

It was soon evident that he was flying from some

terrible object, for he had flung aside his gun, and, in his panic, was taking the shortest line towards us, which lay across a swamp covered with sedge and rushes, greatly impeding his progress, and preventing us from seeing the cause of his flight, or approaching to assist him. Missing his steps from one hard spot to another, he repeatedly fell into the water, but rose in all haste, and continued his flight. I advanced as far as the sods would bear my weight, but to go further was impracticable.

Just within ball-range was an open space, and when the man gained it, I saw that he was pursued by a bear and two cubs. As the person of the fugitive covered the bear, it was impossible to fire without risk. At last he fell exhausted, and the bear being close upon him, I fired both barrels.

The first broke the bear's shoulder, but this only made her more savage, and rising on her hind legs, she advanced with ferocious growls, when the second barrel, though I do not think it took effect, served to frighten her, for, turning round, she retreated, followed by the cubs.

Some natives then waded through the mud to the Moorman, who was completely exhausted, and who, had he not fallen with his head on a tuft of grass, would have been drowned. The poor man was unable to speak, and for several weeks his intellect seemed confused. The adventure sufficed to convince him that he could not again depend upon a charm to protect him from bears, though he always affirmed, that had it not fallen from his hair when he had fastened it under his turban, the bear would not have ventured to attack him.

["That Moorman was a fool," observed the Fat Boy, "though I suppose he knew no better."

"Trusting to charms and talismans to protect you from

danger," observed Vernon, "is not more foolish in its way than trusting to cribs and keys to escape an imposition."

"The cap fits," said the Fat Boy good-humouredly; and addressed himself to the enjoyment of another sandwich, after a generous attempt to share it with each of his school-fellows.

> "'I oft have heard, but ne'er believed till now,
> There are, who can by potent magic spells
> Bend to their crooked purpose nature's laws.'

"Hem—Milton! I remember," said Seymour, "to have read the passage, and you see what sort of commentary upon it Fisher's Bear-story affords. In an encounter with a wild beast, I take it, no 'potent magic spell' equals a good rifle, and in grappling with Homer, Tacitus, Æschylus, and those other worthies of the Ancient World, the best crib is—"

"What!" said the Fat Boy, rousing himself with an appearance of intense interest, which set everybody laughing.

"A good dictionary, and a firm determination to make out the meaning of your author!"

"Whew!" whistled the Fat Boy, "I have looked for 'a wrinkle,—'"

"And you have obtained some capital advice, young shaver," rejoined Douglas. "But go on, Fisher, can you tell us nothing further about bears!"

Fisher again took up his manuscript volume.]

The bear is the only one of the Carnivora dreaded by the Singhalese, and the only one that habitually haunts the depths of the great island-forests. He seldom preys upon flesh, however, but feeds on the honey which he finds in the hollows of the trees and the clefts of the rocks. Occasionally spots of fresh earth are observed which the bear has turned up in search of some favourite root. He regales himself

also on the termites and ants. A friend of Sir Emerson Tennent's, traversing the leafy wilderness near Jaffna, at early dawn, was attracted by the growling of a bear, who, seated upon a lofty branch, was thrusting portions of a red-ants' nest into his mouth with one paw, whilst with the other he endeavoured to clear his eyebrows and lips of the angry inmates, which bit and tortured him in their exceeding wrath.

In Ceylon the bear infests the low and dry districts of the northern and south-eastern coast, and is seldom seen on the mountains or the moist damp plains of the west. His back, between the shoulders, is furnished with a bushy tuft of hair, by which the young are accustomed to cling till sufficiently strong to provide for their own safety.

During a severe drought that afflicted the northern province in 1850, the district of Caretchy was so infested by bears that the Oriental custom of the women resorting to the wells was wholly suspended, as it was a common occurrence to find one of these animals in the water, unable to climb up the yielding and slippery soil, down which it had slided during the night to quench its thirst.

The Ceylon bear is timid and retiring. Hence, on the approach of man or other animals, he manifests great alarm, and his clumsy movements rendering escape impossible, it is his fear, rather than his vicious disposition, that impels him to become an assailant in self-defence. But in such circumstances his assaults are so furious, that the Singhalese are more afraid of him than of any other inhabitant of the forest.

If not armed with a gun, a native, in places frequented by these animals, usually carries a light axe, called 'kodelly,' with which to strike them on the head. The bear, on the other hand, always aims at the face, and, if successful in

prostrating his victim, usually commences by assailing the eyes. So that numerous individuals may be met with in Ceylon who exhibit frightful scars from such encounters, the white seams of their wounds contrasting hideously with the dark colour of the rest of their bodies.

The Veddahs, in Bintenne, whose principal treasure consists of honey, live in constant apprehension of the bears, because, attracted by the perfume, they will not hesitate to attack their rude dwellings, when allured by this irresistible temptation. The post-office runners, who always travel by night, frequently incur great risks from these animals, and to guard against surprise, carry torches, to give warning to the bears, and enable them to shuffle out of the path.

["And now," said Fisher, "I think it is Vernon's turn to tell us a story."

"Come, Blue Jacket,—something stirring and pathetic,—something to make our hearts beat and our eyes kindle! Out with it," said Douglas.

"Ah, ah, something horrible," said the Fat Boy; "I like to feel my flesh creep."

"You have plenty of flesh," retorted Mountjoy, "to enable you to enjoy the feeling."

"'Oh, that his too, too solid flesh would melt!'"

quoted Seymour, "but in such weather as this, even though shut up in a railway carriage, you need fear no such consummation, my boy."

"A truce to your jokes, and let us listen to Vernon. He is quite primed, and has coughed and hemmed a dozen times, to attract the attention of you, irreverent jesters. Now, then, Vernon; once—twice—thrice—and away!"

"Though I shall tell my story in the first person, you will not suppose *me* to have been the hero of it. I read it,

some weeks since, in a book of travels, and it made so strong an impression on my mind that I think I shall have no difficulty in repeating the principal incidents. I call it—A BEAR-HUNT IN TEXAS."*]

A BEAR-HUNT IN TEXAS.

In company with several other adventurers—wild, daring spirits, eager to find opportunities in the Mexican war of obtaining fame and booty, and mounted on the bare back of a spirited mustang—I was traversing the broad plains of the Rio Grande on a glorious summer day. We were ten in number, eight white men, and two Mexicans ; and our immediate object was to gain the mountainous region near the sources of the San Saba river, where we might hope for an exciting bear-hunt, or, at all events, an encounter with the Comanches Indians.

After riding through a pleasant grassy hollow, we suddenly emerged on the wearisome monotony of a level and barren plain, covered with coarse thin grass, and only relieved at intervals of fifteen or twenty miles by miserable clumps of stunted bushes. Oh, how weary we became of this dull uniformity—of the glaring heaven above, which seemed to smite us with its keenest shafts—of the molten horizon which girded us round about as if with a belt of fire—of the brown rank verdure which looked as if it had been scorched by a mighty conflagration ! And how we rejoiced when, against the distant sky, rose a wavering mass of azure, which our leader informed us was the San Saba mountain-range ! The traveller in England or Scotland, who constantly meets with new contrasts of scenery and fresh surprises in the landscape, cannot understand the weariness which blights the wayfarer's soul, when toiling

* 'Wild Sports of the Prairies.'

for two or three hundred miles over a scene unrelieved by the slightest shadow of change.

The day grew old. As the night approached, we could just discern the different breaks and undulations of the mountain-ridge, and the deep shadowy valleys that opened, like the portals of an enchanted world, into their silent recesses. Selecting a rising ground, crested by a group of sheltering trees, we encamped for the night; in great exaltation, by the way, for we had discovered no traces of Indians, and were sufficiently near the hills to reach them in time for sport in the morning.

The night passed without any adventure, and I slept on the soft herbage, and under the canopy of heaven, as soundly as an infant in its mother's arms.

["'Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,'"

ejaculated Seymour, who was rewarded for the interruption by a chorus of deprecatory groans.]

Early in the morning, (continued Vernon,) we snatched a hasty breakfast; fed our horses and carefully cleaned our rifles; and started on our expedition, like school-boys on a foray in an orchard. We sang, we laughed, we shouted, and the echoes of the hills repeated our joyous sounds, as if Nature herself participated in our delight. As we approached the hills, we grew silent, for the majesty of the landscape overpowered us. Like cliffs from a sea, the mountains rose sheer and abrupt from the level of the plain we had been traversing,—rose in a succession of ridges, like an army of Anakim, whose leaders towered in the background, with their crests high among the clouds; glorious in a panoply of colours—green, and purple-black, and rosy —as the lights and the shadows alternately rested on their precipitous sides. And here and there the line was broken

by dim obscure openings, which gave us glimpses into still retreats—so still and lonely, that we almost feared to break their silence or scare their solitude. How did we know but that from eldest time some mysterious beings had made these their abode, and that our presence might be resented as a profanity ?

Just in front rose a swell of grassy land, clothed with the foliage of mighty oaks, whose trunks were festooned with silvery moss, and whose huge arms stretched out far and wide in unimaginable grandeur. We could not see, but we could hear, the ripple and musical flow of a stream, that trailed its silver length through some distant glade. The birds filled the air with music, and the whole scene was so grand and yet so soft, so rich in colour and so picturesque in outline, that even the rudest of my comrades held his breath in silent admiration.

So we stood—it might be for seven or ten minutes—when one of us who was jocularly called 'the Doctor,' directed our thoughts into a very different channel by his sudden exclamation : 'Zounds ! there they are ! I'm into 'em, boys !' And away he galloped, urging his horse to its utmost speed, and flourishing a spear above his head.

I looked round, astonished for the cause of so unexpected an outburst, and saw my companions bending forward in the act of letting out their impatient steeds, with the hope of overtaking the Doctor. Following the same direction, I could descry, from three to four hundred yards ahead, several black and apparently misshapen objects, like mounds of earth, cast up in the long thick grass. I could not understand the eagerness of my comrades to proceed in that direction, until, looking more closely, I observed one of these hillock-looking objects move, and at once understood that it was a bear. 'Huzza !' exclaimed our captain ; 'there's one

for every rifle ;' and away we went, as fast as our mustangs could carry us, speeding over the crisp and fragrant sward, swift as an arrow from a Tartar's bow !

["Good!" exclaimed Seymour ; "the simile is old, but appropriate."

"Don't interrupt him !" cried the others with one accord. "Isn't it jolly !" said the Fat Boy, in a perfect ecstasy of enjoyment.]

The Doctor had gotten the start of us by some two hundred yards. The fiery little pony which his corpulent form bestrode, bore him right up to the nearest bear, where it stood on its hind feet, stupidly snuffing the air, and lost in mute amazement at the advent of so many mortals. Raising his spear, he was on the point of striking, when Bruin suddenly turned tail, and rapidly waddled away. The Doctor followed closely, driving his weapon into its shaggy back, while the pony, as eager in the encounter as his master, bit vigorously at its haunches.

You could not expect the most patient bear to endure such a combination of miseries for any length of time, and wheeling suddenly round, as if he had had enough of it, he gave the pony such a blow with his tremendous paws that it brought him to his knees. The effect of this abrupt halt was to send the Doctor flying over the head of his beast ; a sight so comical, as his round black legs twinkled momentarily in the air, that we all broke into an involuntary shout of laughter.

It was fortunate for the Doctor that Bruin's attention was attracted by the pony for an instant, giving him an opportunity of regaining his feet, and making for the nearest oak. He mounted with all the swiftness of a man inspired by mortal dread, but the bear was close at his heels. He ran out upon a branch, still followed up by the inexorable

animal, and venturing as far as the branch would sustain his weight, there he stood, swaying to and fro, clinging with one hand to the boughs above his head, and with the other darting his spear at the bear's nose to keep him at a safe distance. Meanwhile, Bruin kept pressing closer and closer, and the pony underneath the tree was stamping his feet and whining piteously, in apparent sympathy with his master's perilous position.

Yes; the position was perilous, but it was also ludicrous—at least to an onlooker—from the odd figure and peculiar antics of the Doctor; and we were all so convulsed with laughter, we all so keenly relished, as men are apt to do, the misfortunes of our fellow, that I verily believe the Doctor would have lost his life but for the superior coolness and presence of mind of Hayes, our captain. Recovering himself with an effort, he fired at the bear, and brought it to the ground with a ball through its head.

There were now four bears in sight, who were endeavouring to reach the high ground, and, seeing that the Doctor was safe, we pushed forward with all speed to intercept them before they could quit the plain. We broke up naturally into four groups, each group bent on the pursuit of a particular bear, and pushed them so closely that, instead of attempting to gain the ridges, they fled into the narrow valleys whose distant depths looked so mysterious. A young Virginian and myself had chanced to select the same animal, whom we pursued into the gorge whither he had fled for safety, leaving the rest of our party scattered in different directions. I now for the first time noticed that my mustang was growing troublesome. He had caught scent of the bear, and seemed to be terribly alarmed, rearing and bounding with a violence that sorely tried my skill and mettle as a rider.

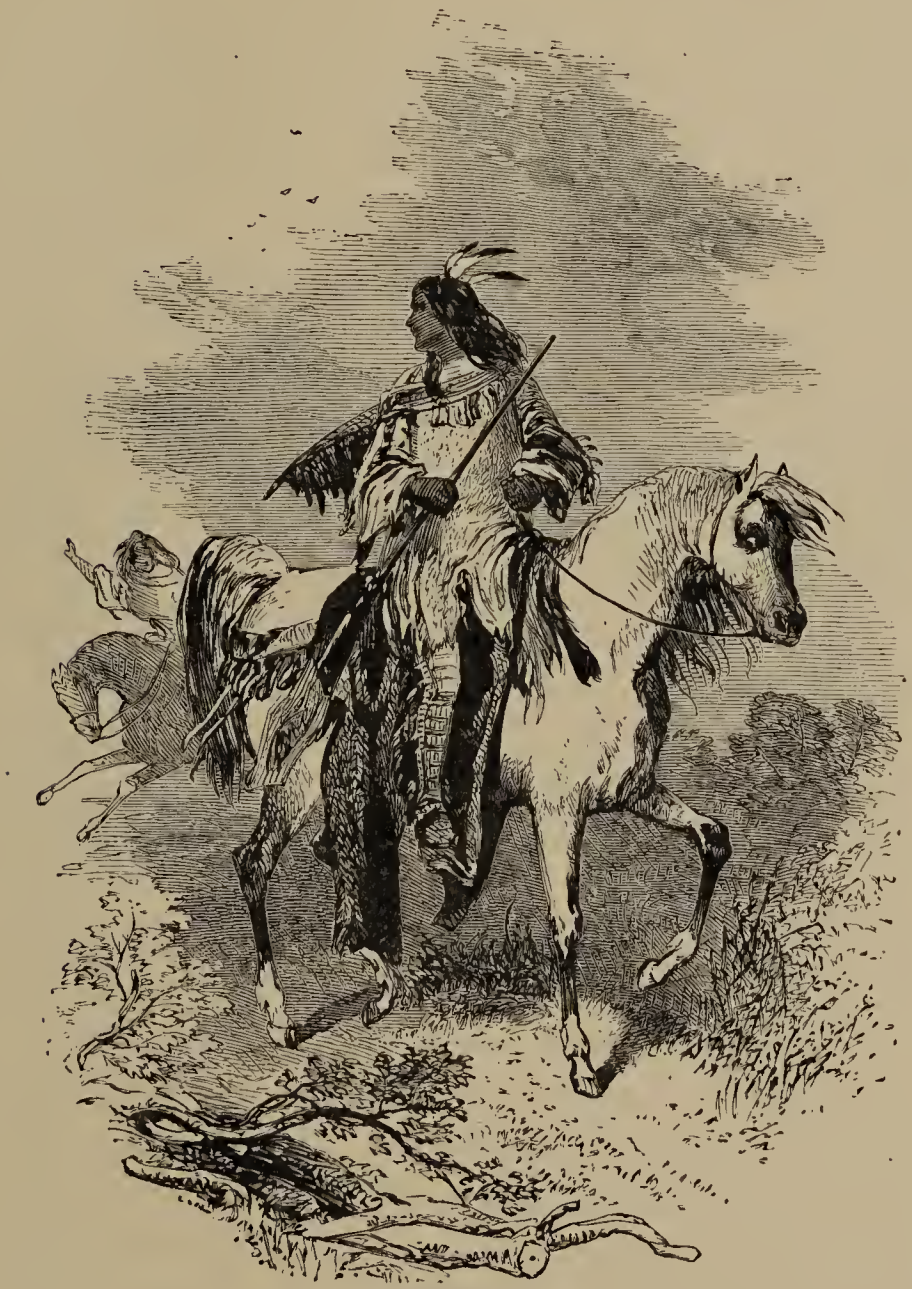
The Virginian outstripped me, and I saw him closing rapidly up on to the bear, which suddenly broke away from the valley—up the hill—and both pursuer and pursued disappeared behind a majestic oak, draped to the very ground with moss, the accumulation of centuries. In another instant I heard the ring of a rifle. I grew desperate at the idea of losing my shot, and grappling tightly at the reins, drove my spurs with a furious lunge into the mustang's flanks.

Three or four mad leaps, and he dashed through the mossy curtain that depended from the oak, to find himself within five paces of the object of his alarm,—the bear which, sorely wounded by the Virginian's shot, was swaying its huge bulk to and fro, and howling in grim agony.

I have read of the Medusa's head, whose horrid stare could freeze into motionless stone the unhappy wight that gazed upon it. Surely fear is as potent a spell. My horse stood still, with hoofs rooted to the earth, as if suddenly congealed to lifeless marble! He was paralyzed with an excess of dread, the cold sweat stood on his rigid skin in thunder-drops; his legs were fixed and stiff; his eyes had a stony glare of speculation in them, like one who saw afar off a thing of unutterable horror! Neither rein nor spur did he acknowledge; had he been of bronze he could not have stood more statue-like. I struck him over the head with my gun-barrel. It was in vain. At last, his fright communicated itself to me; and, truth to say, there was a mystery, an awe in the whole affair, that might have daunted the boldest spirit who ever faced the supernatural!

At this instant—for all had passed in the twinkling of an eye—and just as the Virginian was levelling his rifle for another shot, our ears were saluted with the sharp crack and clang of musketry from the other side of the ridge, and then arose that wild and awful yell which, once heard,

becomes a part of memory and can never be forgotten, the Indian war-whoop—the slogan of the Comanches!



COMANCHE CHIEF IN HIS WAR-DRESS.

Hark! hark! They are coming! Do you not hear their rush and their tramp? Look at their dark forms and grisly crests as they urge their horses down the hill-side!

'The Indians! Take care of thyself, Kentuck!' So cried my companion, as he put spurs to his mustang, and dashed headlong down the valley.

'Take care of thyself!' Ay, no succour was at hand, and death seemed terribly nigh me. I made one more desperate effort to rouse my horse from his panic, and when it failed, sprang off its back, glided under the pendent moss, stole up into the mighty oak, and had just concealed myself in its densest foliage, when, with a horrid yell, a score of plumed and painted Comanches spurred into the valley just beneath my hiding-place. They paused for a moment on seeing my horse, but catching sight of the flying Virginian, swept onward in pursuit, raising a fiendish shout of exultation that made me tremble, and that seemed to break the trance of my mustang, for with a sudden start he wheeled round, and galloped frantically up the valley.

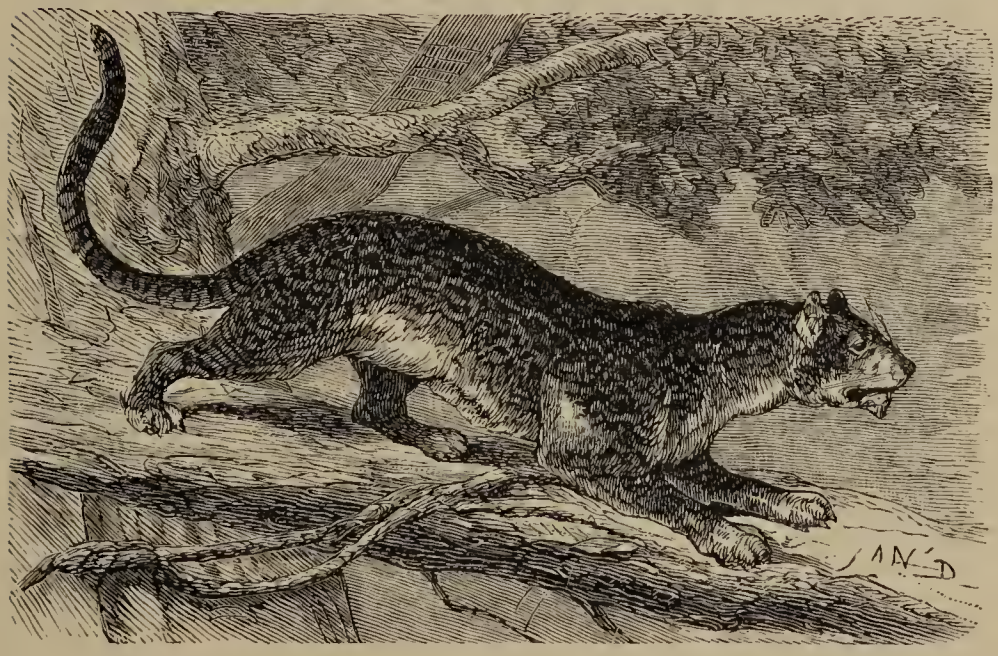
In a few moments the Indians were out of sight, and I was all alone—three hundred miles from the confines of civilization, my horse gone, my friends murdered or scattered—alone, and with no prospect of help, with nothing before me but despair.

How could I hope to regain the town from which I had started? How, without horse or guide, could I traverse three hundred miles of barren desert, even if I escaped the Comanches? As long as my ammunition lasted I should not starve; my bowie knife would provide me with the means of constructing a rude dwelling; but to live alone—alone!—in those wild mysterious mountain-depths, and in daily apprehension of being discovered by the Indians—oh, my heart sank within me. I burst into tears.

The tears relieved me. I remembered there was a God in heaven, and I breathed a prayer to him for strength in the hour of need.

This duty done, I descended the tree, split open the bear's skull, and leisurely began to cut up his huge carcass. The task occupied me until the lengthening shadows marked the advance of night, whose approach was indicated by another sign—the sudden breaking forth of all the voices of the wilderness: some hoarse and loud, some deep, some shrill—all of a nature to excite in lonely man a feeling of alarm.

A prolonged cry, or rather screech, close at hand,



THE PANTHER.

startled me into suspending my work. I looked around, and noticed that the branches of a neighbouring oak trembled and wavered, as if under some great weight. Between two clumps of moss the striped head and blazing eyes of a panther looked forth. The blood had attracted him, and he bared his gleaming fangs as if he longed to fasten them in the body of a victim.

He raised again his unearthly yell, and a hundred echoes repeated it. Should I shoot him? But no; Indian

cars are quick, and the ringing shot would bring them down upon me at daybreak. So I bethought me that I would climb to the summit of an oak, where the panthers could not get at me, bind myself to a branch, and there remain till morning. I knew that I was safe so long as I remained above them, for I could see their eyes as they came up, and fire straight down the limb, if it came to the worst.

On this idea I immediately acted. But I did not relish the constant watch kept upon me by the panther, as his presence would tell tales, and a host of wild animals would surely beleaguer me all night. So, collecting some round pebbles that were strewn along the hillside, I took deliberate aim at his blazing eyes, and saluted him with a volley of so startling a character that he started down the valley at full gallop, and I was troubled with him no more.

My next step was to select some of the choicer pieces of the bear, and hang them to a bough out of reach. Then I ascended the oak, and clambered up so high that, by standing upright, I could look beyond its huge leafy arms, and see the stars spangling the blue vault of heaven. After gazing for a while on the unutterable splendours of the night, until a sense of its infinite tranquillity fell upon my soul, I retired within the shelter of the dark green foliage, committed myself to God in prayer, and soon fell asleep.

When I awoke, the glow of the morning was upon the earth, and the voices of the mountains and the forest were hushed. So, as the coast was clear, I nimbly descended from my temporary couch, and prepared to break my fast. But 'woe is me,' I cried when I looked around, 'the thieves have stolen my provision.' Of the bear, and of the delicacies I had so carefully put aside, nothing was left but the fur and the bones, and my only resource, if I would not

starve, was to start in quest of food. I was faint with thirst and hunger, but I pressed forward, and soon emerged from the valley on the high ground which sloped down to the prairie. Beneath the tree which had so opportunely sheltered the Doctor, lay the skeleton of the bear, completely stript by the wolves, with the spear still sticking between the ribs, where the Doctor's vigorous arm had thrust it. I climbed this tree to the topmost bough, and surveyed the prairie for scores of miles, in the hope that I might see some signs of my companions, but as none were visible I sorrowfully concluded that all had fallen victims to the guns of the Comanches. Oh, dreary, very dreary was the solitude that met my aching gaze—all was barren, and all was silent. In the dawn of Time the scene could not have worn a more desolate or solitary aspect.

Sick with hunger, fatigue, and despair, I descended the tree, and flung myself on the grass. I must have lain there for an hour or more in a sort of stupor, my brain distracted between memories of bygone days and apprehensions for the future. When the fit passed away, I heard the croak of a raven, which had planted its unclean form on the oak above me—

["'Ghastly, grim, and ancient raven, wandering from the nightly shore,'"

murmured Seymour.]

—and I took its presence to be an omen of evil and darkness. But suddenly I remembered the Scriptural allusion to Him who feedeth the young ravens, and I took comfort, for I knew that where the bird resorted *there* must be some kind of aliment. What might it be? The snails! Yes; the bears and the ravens alike frequented this moist rich ground in search of snails, and I knew that, unsavoury as such food might be, I should not starve. Searching among

the grass I discovered a number of them, many as large as my thumb, and I speedily indulged in a repast which hunger made endurable, and even delicious.

["Ah," interrupted the Fat Boy, "if he could only have tasted these ham-sandwiches! Snails!—ugh!"

"But I remember—if Vernon will excuse my breaking the thread of his most interesting story," said Douglas—"to have read that one kind of snail, the *Helix pomatia*, I think, was formerly reputed a great delicacy. It was imported into England by Sir Kenelm Digby for the benefit of his beautiful wife, Venetia, and I believe it was also bred by one of the Earls of Arundel, in Arundel Park."

"Yes," said Seymour, "and in some countries, as Switzerland and parts of France, this kind of snail forms an important article of commerce. They are fed by thousands in places expressly constructed for them, called *escargatoires*, and are used, boiled in milk, for diseases of the lungs. On the shores of the Mediterranean, when boiled in the shell and eaten with rice, they are esteemed a dainty dish—"

"To set before a Fat Boy," cried Mountjoy; "but go on, Vernon. I am all impatient to know how your Texan hunter conquered his difficulties."]

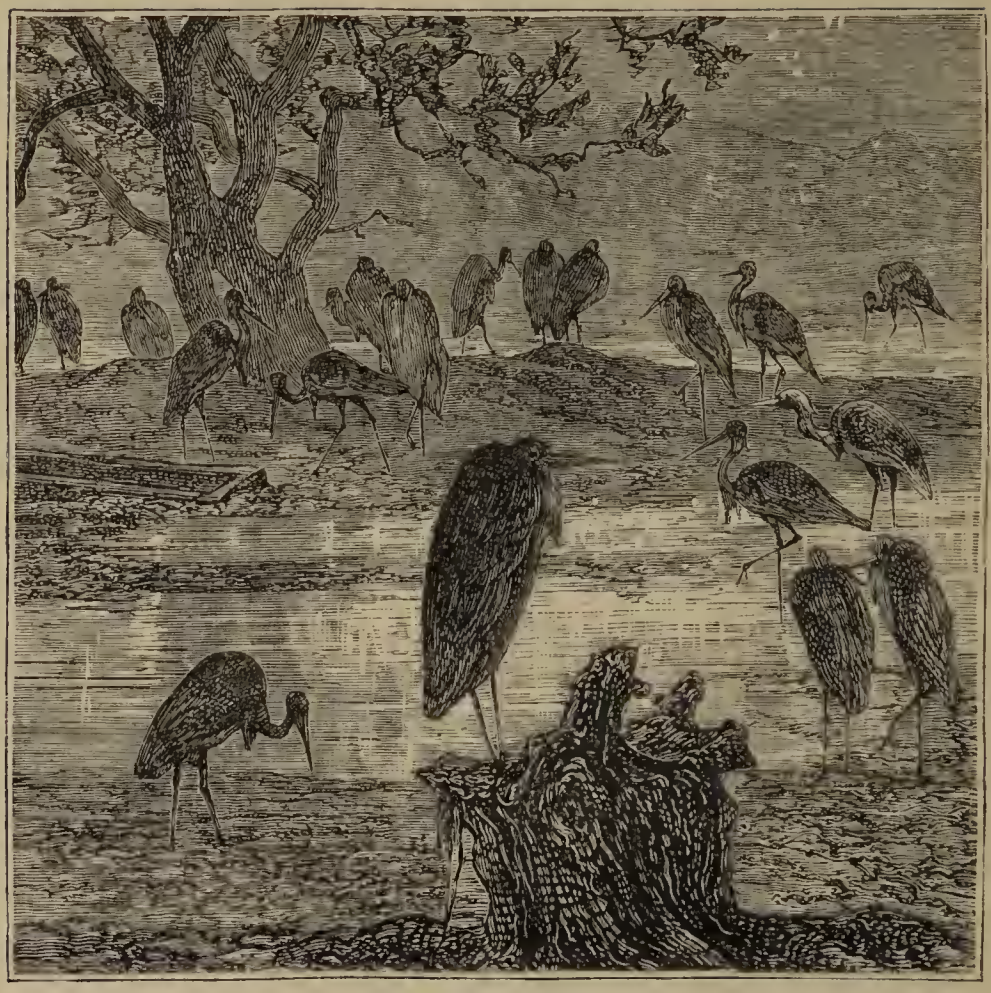
As soon as my repast was finished, I rose, invigorated and hopeful, and started towards the sunrise. All I knew about my course was simply this, that as we had come in a westerly direction, to return to Bexar I must travel east. On a monotonous plain, bare of trees, it is no easy matter to keep a direct route; there are no landmarks to guide your hesitating steps; nothing that rises above the dead level of the prairie to attract and fix your gaze. But I went forward, manfully if not cheerfully, and contrived to follow a tolerably direct line. At sunset I halted to look for snails and water. For the first two or three days snails

were abundant, and I found water without much difficulty, but afterwards both grew scarce, and I experienced at the same time all the miseries of hunger and thirst. I could no longer maintain a direct route, for my glances roved everywhere in search of some kind of sustenance.

Now and then a herd of mustangs, in all the glory of their gleaming hides and silken manes, their flashing eyes and elastic limbs, would sweep past me, and gallop out of range almost before I could raise my gun. The deer at my approach would spring from their grassy couches, toss their antlered heads, and fly lightly along the dry brown sward. The clumsy cranes would stalk to and fro, arching their long necks, and croaking hoarsely; then, when my gun was raised, would spread their long wings and lazily sail away. In my recklessness I frequently fired, but always without success, their thick feathers proving impervious to my shot.

I saw no other living thing except the wolves—the wolves that followed perseveringly in my track, as if assured that my strength would eventually fail, and I should fall a victim to their murderous fangs. I endeavoured, by various devices, to lure them within gunshot, but they proved too wary. I grew weaker and more exhausted every hour, and at night could obtain no rest, from the need that was upon me of keeping constant watch. My nerves were strung to their highest tension; my senses painfully excited. The clang of a crane's wing broke on my ear like the roar of artillery; the sun's glare seemed to blind me; I could not endure the moonlight without pain. Strange spectacles moved before my weary eyes—the banners of glittering armies; arch upon arch of glorious rainbow hues; and vast lakes of shimmering water, whose shores, alas! I could never reach.

For two days, perhaps, I dragged myself along under



A GROUP OF CRANES.

this burthen of intolerable woe. My rifle hung heavily on my shoulder, but I clung to it like a drowning sailor to the frail plank that is between him and death. Often I wished that I could meet the Comanches, so that I might die like a man, and not fall a prey to the reeking wolves.

I suppose I had almost lost sensation and the power of thought, when suddenly, from the dead level of the prairie, started up a clump of trees. The sight restored me to consciousness, and sent the blood rushing and tingling through every vein. I seemed to have gained instantaneous strength. With a half-despairing, half-hopeful cry of 'Water! water! I rushed, as fast as my limbs would carry me, towards the

leafy clump. Now I noticed a line of those 'motts,' as they are called, stretching for some miles across the plain, and I knew that they indicated the presence of a stream. Oh, how exquisite a happiness thrilled my soul! What pleasant visions floated through my brain! I was saved—home, friends, the faces of the loved ones, the joys and duties of life—all would be mine once more!

I reached the mott, and in the rugged gully beneath rippled a bright transparent brook. Dropping my gun, I tore down the bank and plunged my head into the liquid depth. I gulped several mouthfuls before I discovered that it was salt—salt—salt as brine! O death! O misery! Years have passed by since then, and still the recollection of the horror of that moment comes vividly upon me! The draught was like poison to my enfeebled frame. A violent sickness—a spasm—a sensation of utter darkness—and I fell insensible.

["Oh, blow it, Vernon, don't harrow up a fellow's feelings in this way," cried the Fat Boy, who sat, the picture of misery, with staring eyes and red cheeks, and his hand, grasping a half-eaten sandwich, arrested in its progress towards his mouth.

"Go on, Vernon," cried the others, "it's a shame to interrupt such a stunning story."]

How long I remained unconscious I cannot tell, but when I awoke my brain was strangely free from confusion. I felt singularly calm and peaceful. I acknowledged to myself that the struggle was over now, and I wondered why I had striven so hard to preserve a life that was worth so little. But, at least, I would seek a fitter place to die in. The old children's fable of the Babes in the Wood returned all at once to my memory, and I thought I should like to repose as they did, on a couch of moss, where the trees might shed their leaves upon my bones. So I crawled up the bank, and

soon found as soft a bed as ever cradled a Sybarite's languid limbs. There I flung myself, and lay in a half-dreamy, half-conscious state, blending the scenes of the past—the old grange, where I had spent my childhood, the village mill, the snowy blossoms of the orchard, the ivy-shrouded tower of the ancient church—with the features of the landscape around me, with its deep gully, its deceitful stream, its leagues of dreary desolation, until the whole formed a wilder phantasmagoria than ever poet dreamed of!

A stray sunbeam fell on my face and roused me.

I looked up—a last look, as I thought—at the beautiful green leaves and the bright blue sky which shimmered through the open foliage; and lo, above me, within a few feet of my face, and crouching close to the body of the tree, sat a large fox-squirrel!

Surely sent by Providence to save me!

Yes, to save me; for instantly I felt that I was reprieved, and the keen desire of life again took possession of heart and brain. Slowly and softly I lifted my gun with one hand, raised it, without shifting my position, and fired.

The squirrel fell dead upon my breast!

I contrived to raise myself on my knees, drew out my knife, cut up the animal, greedily sucked the blood, and ate as much as I cared of the raw flesh. At once I felt invigorated, and breathing a brief but earnest prayer of thanksgiving, I fell back on my couch and slept.

For hours I must have slept—a delightful dreamless sleep, which calmed my excited nerves; and when I woke I finished the remainder of the squirrel, rose from my mossy couch, and resumed my journey. I staggered a little at first, but soon recovered, and pressed cheerily forward, in the certain conviction that God had spared my life, and would provide the means of safety.

I had not gone many miles when I discovered two Mexicans driving a herd of cattle. They rode towards me, and on learning my distressed condition, one of them took me up behind him, and made all speed towards Bexar, which we reached the same evening. There I was received as one who had risen from the grave. All my comrades but two had escaped from the Comanches, after a fierce struggle and a hot pursuit, but they naturally concluded that the Virginian and myself had been killed by the Indians, or carried off prisoners. I lay ill for several days of a low fever and great nervous exhaustion, but the doctor attended me with equal skill and care, and, thanks to my youth and a naturally strong constitution, I recovered. Soon afterwards I embarked for England, satisfied with my brief career of adventure, and unwilling again to incur the risk of a Bear-hunt in Texas.

["My story is done," added Vernon, "and I must apologize for its length."

"No apology is needed," said Seymour, "and, for my part, I shall not move a formal vote of thanks, assured that you will have noticed the breathless interest with which we have listened to your exciting narrative, and consequently will judge how deeply indebted we are to your abilities as a story-teller."

"I had no idea," said Mountjoy, "that Ned could tell so good a story. Why, your language was as poetical as Seymour's."

"It was not my own, remember, but that of the original author's. At least, I borrowed some and invented some."

The Fat Boy, who had been profoundly musing, here broke in—

"I wonder," said he, "what raw squirrel tastes like! It's a pity that Texan chap had no lucifers with him, or he might

have lit a fire and roasted the animal. For myself, now, I think cooked meat much—"

A shout of laughter drowned the rest of this characteristic sentence, which furnished so curious a commentary on Vernon's exciting narrative. Douglas then informed his schoolmates that he also knew an anecdote about bears, and was willing to retail it if they were willing to hear it. Seymour, who invariably acted as spokesman, fugleman, and general orator, thereupon requested him to "fire away."]

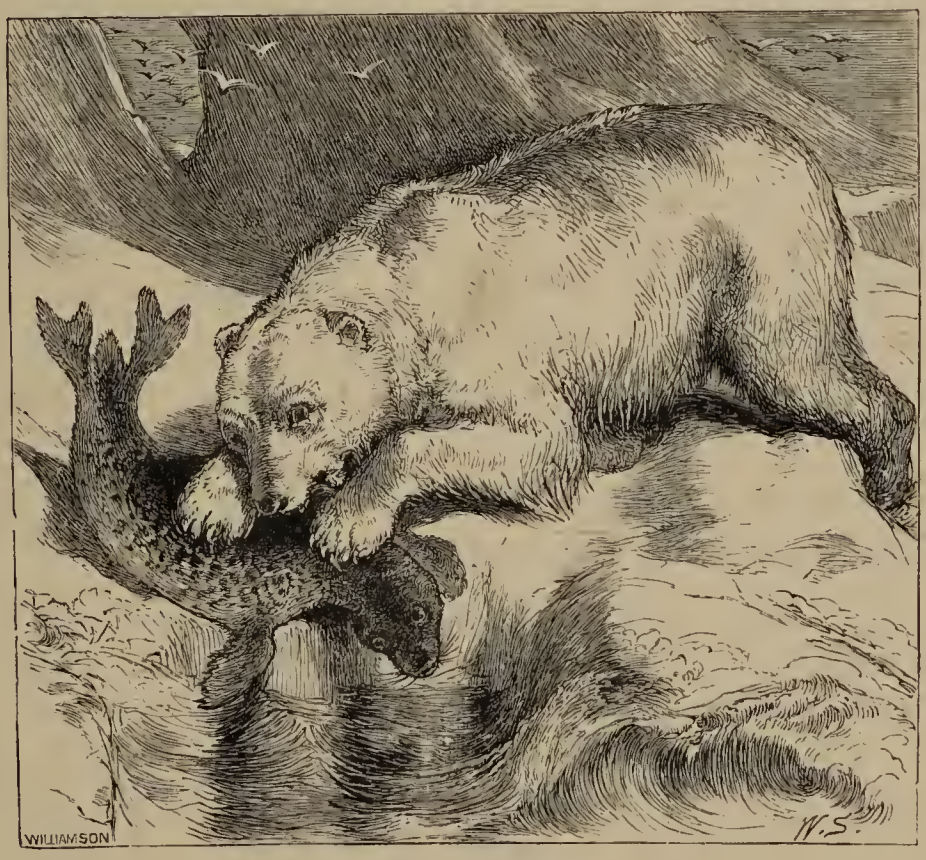
THE MOTHER'S DELIVERANCE.

The scene is in Greenland, (said Douglas,) that bleak and inhospitable region where winter reigns for nearly all the year, and man's life seems deprived of every enjoyment.

The long dreary winter, however, had passed away; the red sun once more rose above the horizon; the snow melted on the plains and in the sequestered valleys; Nature awoke from her long and death-like sleep; and men began to address themselves to their ordinary labour. The father of a certain Eskimo family, who had embraced Christianity and planted themselves near one of the Danish settlements, set out, among others, on a distant expedition in search of seals and fish. His wife and children remained at home, attending to their household duties. Their hut, it is true, was in a lonely position, but it was more comfortable than many others. It was entered by a kind of low, narrow tunnel, to exclude the cold icy wind, and egress or ingress could only be effected by creeping along the passage on your hands and feet. But for this very reason the interior of the hut was exceedingly warm, and unless when food had to be cooked, no fire was kindled. The lamp which lighted the room afforded sufficient additional heat.

The first day of the father's absence passed quietly with-

out any disturbing incident. The second was marked by a sudden return of the cold weather, and the mother, as evening came on, thought anxiously of her husband, and prayed for his safe return. She was sitting with her children, and reading to them out of a Danish Bible, when a low wild cry, at some distance off, made her tremble in every nerve. It was



THE POLAR BEAR.

the roar of a Polar Bear, one of the most ferocious varieties of the tribe, of immense strength and remarkable fierceness. The stories formerly told of its cruel and sanguinary nature were, however, grossly exaggerated, and unless pressed by hunger it seldom attacks man, or approaches human habitations. As the Eskimo woman was aware of this fact, she endeavoured to calm her fears, and resumed her reading; but the roar was soon repeated, and evidently nearer. Then, after

another interval of silence, she heard it close at hand, and the terrible conviction smote her heart that the fierce beast had scented them in the hut, and was endeavouring to find an entrance.

With that energy which despair lends to the feeble, she began to drag the stones that served as seats, and every weighty article within her reach, towards the door, so as to make a strong barricade. After some minutes of agonizing suspense, the roaring and scraping outside suddenly ceased.

But then—terrible sound!—came a great noise on the wall, the roof shook, and she understood that their ferocious foe had ascended to it, with the intention of forcing his way downwards upon them. And she knew that if he discovered the small chimney opening, and got his paw in, his immense strength would readily enable him to rend the roof to pieces.

With a cry of despair the poor woman embraced her children, and sank, half unconscious, on the floor.

Just then her eldest boy, a child of six years old, exclaimed, pulling her by the dress,—

'Mother, let us pray! Will not God help us?'

'You are right, my child,' she said; and folding her little ones in her arms, she fell on her knees, and called to the Lord to help them in their agony.

I suppose that no miracles are wrought now-a-days—at least, no sudden and extraordinary disturbances of the laws of Nature; but, as my father says, God still hearkens to the voice of prayer, and stretches forth his arm to help those who put their trust in his almighty love and power. The mother's petition did not fall to the ground. No miraculous interposition took place, but surely it was from Heaven the sudden thought came like an inspiration, *Kindle a fire!* She rose from her knees—excited, trembling, yet confident—

collected a hoard of dry moss and sticks which had been put aside in case of need, and ignited it by means of the lamp. It soon sprung into a clear bright flame, which she assiduously fed with fresh fuel, until it shot upwards—a glowing column of light—towards the low roof. It leaped through the opening!—a loud roar; a crash; and the Eskimos knew that their enemy had fled in alarm.

The next morning her husband and his companions returned exultant, bringing with them a store of fish, and the carcass of an enormous bear, probably the nocturnal prowler that had sought admission into the hut, and had been so singularly terrified from his cruel purpose.

Thus, you see, there is One above, who, even in these latter days, is not only a Hearer, but an Answerer, of prayer.

["That reminds me," said Seymour, "of some lines of Tennyson's—if I can but remember them—let me see;—yes, they run as follows:—

> . . . . 'More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
> Rise like a fountain for me night and day:
> For what are men better than sheep or goats,
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
> Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
> For so the whole round world is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.'"

"What a chap you are, Seymour," cried the Fat Boy, admiringly; "I cannot make out how you can read and remember so much. Why, what *I* learn, somehow or other, slips through my brain like—like—"

"Like water through a sieve," observed Fisher; "but the fact is, you put in so many ham-sandwiches and apple-puffs on the top of what you read, it is impossible for the knowledge ever to throw off the weight of the food!"

"Well, I'm always hungry; that's a fact," rejoined the Fat Boy, as he dived once more into the recesses of his wallet.

"I know a few pretty verses about prayer," exclaimed Douglas, "if you would like to hear them. They are written by a poet named Coleridge, and my Aunt Sarah gave me a shilling for learning them by heart."

"I say," cried the Fat Boy, "what did you buy with it?"

"Go on, Douglas," said Seymour; "I know the lines, and wish that every one of you knew them, and repeated them nightly."

"It is called," continued Douglas,—

"'THE CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

'Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
God grant me grace my prayers to say!
O God, preserve my mother dear,
In health and strength for many a year;
And oh! preserve my father too,
And may I pay him reverence due;
And may I my best thoughts employ
To be my parents' hope and joy!
My sisters and my brothers both
From evil guard, and save from sloth;
And may we always love each other,
Our friends, our father, and our mother!
And still, O Lord, to me impart
A contrite, pure, and grateful heart,
That after my last sleep I may
Awake to thy eternal day!"

"Bravo!—excellent!—capital!" chorused the boys; and Vernon then observed that he also remembered a little incident about the bears. Whereupon he was unanimously requested to relate it, as no signs of relief from their captivity could yet be discerned, and boys never grow weary of listening to exciting stories.]

A DISASTROUS BEAR-HUNT.

The scene lies in Sweden, and the actors in it are four Swedish peasants—Munter, Olsson, Thomasson, and Persson.

It was on a bleak December morning that, armed with rifles, and two of them also provided with axes, they set forth to compass the death of a bear which was known to inhabit the neighbouring forest. They were accompanied by two dogs, though both were unaccustomed to bear-hunting.

By daybreak the hunters had already been an hour in the forest; but as they were still about two miles from the spot where the bear was supposed to conceal himself, and as snow fell heavily from the wind-swept trees, each man carried his gun in a case. On they tramped, wholly unapprehensive of danger, when one of the party—Thomasson—conceived the idea of exploring an old cavern which lay very nearly in their route. It was situated under the root of a huge tree which had fallen in a violent storm; but as the dogs had already clambered along the mossy trunk of the tree, and had even leaped over the very mouth of the den itself, without discovering anything, and as, moreover, the den had not been tenanted for three winters, the hunters never supposed they ran any risk in approaching it without first making ready their weapons for action.

While Thomasson, however, was peering under the root, and probably stirring up the snow and earth with his *skidor*, or snow-skate,—which, I must tell you, is seven to nine feet long,—a bear, or rather *the* bear, their coveted prize, suddenly dashed forth, upsetting the astonished hunter, though, happily, without doing him any injury; then away he sped, as fast as his legs could carry him. He had not covered more than about one hundred and fifty paces, however, before Munter, having got his rifle in order, fired,

and, as was afterwards ascertained, wounded the fugitive. Stung by the pain, perhaps, the bear halted for a moment, affording Persson an opportunity of saluting him in the rear with a second bullet; whereupon he continued his flight, and soon disappeared in the tangled coverts of the wood.

Munter remained on the spot to load, while his comrades pursued the bear. The snow was deep enough to support a pair of snow-skates, but not deep enough to enable the bear to retreat with speed; and Olsson, being the best runner, soon left his comrades behind and gained upon the wounded animal. After he had proceeded a few hundred yards, however, in the blood-stained track, the bear suddenly and most unexpectedly sprang out upon him. The beast had rapidly doubled, returned in a line parallel to his first track, and taken refuge in a thicket; from which, when his pursuer passed, he made his attack. So swift was the onset that Olsson had no time to fire, but he drove his gun crosswise into the brute's open, ravenous jaws. The bear bit the stock through near to the lock, and then flung the barrel high up into the air; and as Olsson had now no other weapon with which to defend himself, the bear grappled him with both paws, and threw him backwards on the snow, wounding him severely on the head and in the face; then, turning his victim partly over, he placed his ear close to Olsson, as if he were fain to detect any signs of remaining vitality. The man still breathed! Thereupon the beast caught him by his left side, lifted him from the ground, shook him as a dog worries a cat; and repeating the same treatment on the right side, dropped him on the snow, insensible, bleeding, and to all appearance dead.

Where were his companions all this time? Not forty paces distant! But they stood motionless, passive spectators of the cruel tragedy, either from stupor or fear, or from the

idea entertained by the Swedish peasants, that if a man fire at such a time, the bear, if not shot dead, will immediately despatch his victim.

Munter, however, now came up, and seeing his brother's danger, proceeded to his rescue without a moment's delay. When he had advanced about thirty feet the bear dropped the wounded hunter, and resting his fore paws on the bleeding body, defiantly faced his new antagonist. The warning shouts of his companions deterred Munter from firing; so casting aside his rifle, he seized his axe, and with a firm front advanced to the encounter. When he was within four or five feet the bear quietly released his hold of his victim, and retired into the forest.

Thomasson, who had concealed himself behind a bush, now fired, but his ball whistled past the bear, and was lost in the wooded depths; the sound, however, seemed to revive the fury of Mr. Bruin, who wheeled round hastily, and, growling in a most savage mood, rushed at his adversaries. The nearest to him was Munter, who was hastening back to pick up his gun; but being delayed by his snow-skates, he could not elude the onset of the bear, who struck him headlong to the ground. As, however, he fell with his face deep in the snow, and by holding his breath deluded his enemy into a belief that he was killed, he escaped, though severely wounded, much better than his unfortunate brother.

A minute or two passed. The bear, of his own accord, left Munter and returned to the spot—it was close at hand—where he had outraged Olsson. The latter, however, had so far recovered himself as to be able to crawl under a neighbouring bush, where he lay securely hidden, and thus escaped a second attack. Round and round the scene of fight the bear paced for some time, as if exulting in his prowess, then he once more plunged into the forest-gloom. He met with

no molestation, for Thomasson and Persson were unwilling to risk the chances of a combat with an enemy who had proved so formidable.

The wounded men were conveyed home as speedily as possible; and next day, taking to themselves four new comrades, Thomasson and Persson sallied forth against the victorious Bruin. Warned by the previous day's disasters, they now moved warily, with their guns ready for action, and keeping close together, so as to be ready to help one another in case of need.

As the track of the bear from the late scene of conflict was easily followed up by its line of blood, the hunters expected every moment to come upon the bear's dead body. Evidently he had been wounded sore. But, to their surprise, and not a little to their dismay, they had not penetrated into the forest more than half a mile when the monster suddenly darted out of a thick brake and charged them! With such rapidity did he make his onset that he had almost seized one of the party, before Olof Ersson, a youth of eighteen, who had never before seen a bear, sent a bullet into his eye.

Serious as was the wound, it did not prevent the enraged brute from dashing Persson to the ground, and wounding him in the head and the right arm. Still worse might it have fared with the unlucky hunter, had not the gallant Ersson hastened to his relief. Throwing aside his discharged gun, he seized his axe, and dealt the bear such a thunderous blow on the head that he fell prostrate on his victim's body. After a moment he made a frantic effort to rise, but a couple of shots fired by others of the party terminated his struggles and his life.

He proved to be an old male, with a blackish gray fur, and measured upwards of eight feet in length.

And this is the end of my story.

["I had no idea," said Beauchamp, "that a bear—especially a Scandinavian bear—was so formidable an antagonist!"

"Well, you see," exclaimed Douglas, "that if you came to close quarters with him mischief would be *brewing!*"

"O Douglas," said Vernon, "how *can* you perpetrate bad puns in our melancholy circumstances?"

"Bother," replied Douglas; "may I not keep my spirits up in my own way?"

"A German writer," interrupted Fisher, "remarks of the bear, that he is a majestic animal, and that he instils fear and respect into mankind as well as into the brute creation. People may enlarge as much as they please upon his rapacity and ferocity, and the ravages he commits, but no thoroughbred hunter would wish to see him disappear altogether from our beasts of chase."

"But that is not the opinion, I imagine," said Seymour, "of the peasants of Sweden."

"No, indeed; and in order to keep down the number of these ferocious animals, bear-hunts, or *skalls*, as you have already heard, are frequently organized. Mr. Lloyd speaks of some in which he took part as enlisting the services of five to six hundred men, and accompanied by a band of two drummers and as many buglers! The appearance of such a body, fully armed, is necessarily very imposing."

"I wonder," said Douglas, "the bears don't come in and surrender at once, when they see so large an army bearing down upon them! But come, Fisher, tell us something more about these *skalls*—that's a good fellow."]

Fisher willingly consented, and proceeded as follows:—

A SCANDINAVIAN SKALL.

I propose to describe a *skall* which was witnessed by Mr. Lloyd, a well-known lover of sport.

The hour appointed for the gathering of the hunters was two o'clock in the morning; but on this occasion not more than a hundred and twenty men had assembled, and it became a question whether, with so small a number, the *skall* should be carried on. As nearly all were armed in one way or another, and as about twenty-five carried guns, it was determined, however, to take the field.

The array having been drawn up in two lines, and each man numbered on his hat with chalk in the usual manner, everything was pronounced to be in order, and the whole party marched off in silence to the scene of action.

The ring, or enclosed area within which the bears were hemmed in, proved to be of limited extent; and as the forest was open in places, Mr. Lloyd's little force contrived to draw a tolerably effective cordon round it. It was then divided into two sections—one, the *holl*, being stationary, remained in position at a particular point; the other, the *dref*, or driving division, was to advance and beat the country towards the former. The *holl* was placed under Mr. Lloyd's command, and the *dref* under a certain Jan Finne.

Every man being at his post, Jan Finne discharged his gun as a signal for his division to move forward. Those at the *holl* were now all attention, and eagerly watching for the bears, whose appearance might any moment be expected. Loud and continued shouting soon made known the fact that they had been seen by some of the party, but no shots were fired, and presently silence again prevailed. Suddenly, however, Mr. Lloyd perceived three beasts rushing through the brake towards him. They were not more than forty paces distant, and had Mr. Lloyd waited, would probably have approached much nearer; but, in his surprise, he fired both right and left, though apparently without effect; for,

instantly wheeling about, they dashed off again, as if shot and gunpowder had never been invented.

As they dashed along the line to the left they drew upon themselves a continuous firing; but shortly all was quiet again, whence the hunters inferred that the beasts had either been killed or had succeeded in effecting their escape.

Meantime Mr. Lloyd had reloaded, and was again on the look-out. A young bear approaching his position, he was in the act of taking aim, when a bullet from a friend's rifle stretched the animal lifeless on the ground.

"No hard firing," says Mr. Lloyd, "took place subsequently, but shots were still occasionally heard at various parts of the ring. Soon again I saw the outline of a large bear as she was crashing through the brake, and had just time to fire one barrel before she was lost to view; but though the ball did not bring her down, yet, from the reel she gave, it evidently took effect.

"A few seconds afterwards we heard several shots to the right, the direction taken by the beast, and at the same time the people thereabouts shouted lustily as if for aid.

"Apprehensive of an accident, and without having had time to reload, I ran to the spot, and found the uproar to have arisen from the old bear having attacked a peasant named Sven Andersson. Though only armed with a stout stake, this man, aided by two or three others, had gallantly opposed the beast's attempt to break through the cordon; and though he himself was capsized, and a good deal maltreated, he succeeded in driving the beast back again into the ring.

"Fortunately the poor fellow was but slightly hurt—attributable, probably, to the bear being herself severely wounded when she charged. Unluckily, however, all his injuries were in his rear, so that many a laugh was subsequently raised at his expense. But Sven stoutly denied that he had bolted—

which, indeed, is not likely; for had he run, there is little doubt, from the disabled state of the bear, that he might readily have got out of the way."

When Mr. Lloyd found that no serious injury was done, he left a hunter in charge of the *holl*, and hastened to Jan Finne, to ascertain how his division had fared. From him Mr. Lloyd learned that the remaining young bear, in spite of every effort to turn him, had broken through the ring; though not unhurt, as was evident from the blood on the few patches of snow still lying on the ground.

Nor was this all; for while the bear was in the very act of breaking the line, one of the peasants imprudently fired, and the ball, instead of lodging in the beast's carcass, struck the thigh of one of his companions. Apparently, however, the poor man was not seriously hurt, and, in spite of the wound, contrived to limp to a neighbouring cottage, whence he was subsequently carried home in a cart.

It was some compensation for these disasters that the old bear was again caught sight of within the ring.

To ensure, as far as possible, her destruction, the circle—always excepting the people stationed at the centre of the *holl*—was now gradually contracted, until the opposing lines met as near together as prudence would permit. Still the bear did not show herself; which was, perhaps, all for the best, inasmuch as, had she danced about the ring as in the first instance, and much firing had taken place, accidents from stray bullets would probably have occurred.

At length, however, a peasant descried the beast in a thicket, rolling to and fro in convulsions of agony; and Jan Finne immediately put a ball through her head.

During this little *skall* eighty to ninety shots must have been fired, and the greater portion within the first few minutes. This sharp practice, together with the shouts of

the people, and the frequent transitory glimpses one or other of the party caught of the bears, rendered the scene peculiarly animated and interesting.

The bears were now carried off to an open glade in the forest, that the peasants might satisfy their curiosity. The mother proved to be large and fat; the cub, apparently about three years old. Afterwards they were slung upon poles, supported by several men, and while the band played some enlivening tunes, they marched down from the forest and defiled into the highroad.

In the evening a grand village-festival celebrated the successful conclusion of the *skall*.

I may now repeat an anecdote in illustration of the courage of Scandinavian boys in a position of great peril,—of infinitely greater peril than that which *we* now occupy, here on the snow-clad Yorkshire moors.

Two boys, cousins,—one ten years old, the other twelve,—were tending their parents' cows and sheep on the border of a Norwegian forest. Towards evening a she-bear, followed by a couple of cubs, suddenly rushed towards the herd. "The bear is here!" exclaimed the elder of the lads to his companion, who was at some little distance; "*pass opp! pass opp!*" (look out! look out!) The beast was chasing one of the sheep; and though the boy had no better weapon than a stick, he gallantly hastened to the rescue, and brandished his cudgel in a threatening attitude. But the odds were too unequal; for, on his venturing nearer, she rose on her hind legs and laid the gallant little fellow prostrate.

The younger lad, hearing his cries, rushed to the spot. What was his horror when he saw the bear lying over his cousin, and not only distinctly heard a dreadful crunching noise, but perceived the cruel fangs in direct contact with his head! In that part of the country the youngest carries

a knife suspended by a belt about the waist. Such was the case with our little hero, who now made an effort to draw his weapon; but rain having fallen in the morning, the wooden handle of the knife stuck fast in the sheath, and his efforts to release it were all in vain. He did not lose heart, however, but, seizing his staff, went straight up to the bear and began to cudgel her lustily. As if confounded by the impertinence, she gave a deep growl, sprung to her feet, and marched away sullenly.

As soon as she had released her victim, and while making a second effort to catch the sheep she had previously chased, the courageous little fellow contrived to extricate his knife; and brandishing the shining blade, he thus addressed the bear, emphasizing his words by sundry threatening gestures: "Be off with you! Make yourself scarce, or you shall see how I will serve you!" Observe, the Norwegian peasants believe that this form of words, added to a display of bright steel, will scare the fiercest bear that ever prowled in forest!

By this time the wounded boy had risen to his feet, and joined his comrade; and the two heroes again advancing upon the bear, she made off with her cubs, and allowed the sheep to escape.

Thereupon the young Norwegians hastened home with their flocks and herds, leaving the beasts no other trophy than the cap of the elder; which, however, rent in pieces, was afterwards found at no great distance from the scene of conflict.

The clothes of the wounded boy were torn to rags, and he himself was sorely bitten, not only in both shoulders, but in the thigh near to the hip, and in the head, which was sadly gashed and scarred. It is a pleasure to state, however, that he completely recovered.

["I am glad to hear it," said Douglas; "both these boys were uncommon bricks!"

"Yes," remarked Vernon. "I doubt whether any of us would have cared to confront a bear."

"One thing must be remembered," said Fisher, "and that is,—the Swedes from their earliest youth are accustomed to the neighbourhood of wild beasts, and their hardy training gives them presence of mind. I don't think an English boy would run from a bear, if he gave himself time to think about it. If taken by surprise, he would run; but not, I believe, from cowardice. But allow me to tell you another curious story."]

THE BEAR AND THE BELL-RINGER.

A Mr. Ullgren had determined on an expedition against a bear which had been doing much mischief in the neighbourhood of a small lake called Löf-sjön. He set out accompanied by sixteen men, who were to surround the supposed retreat of the bear, and attended by a Rygy-väru —that is, a person specially charged to protect his master's person. On several occasions during the first day's hunt, he got within a few paces of his coveted prey, but, owing to the denseness of the cover, was unable to fire.

Next day the hunting-party was increased to twenty-five in number,—including, however, several small boys. Mr. Ullgren succeeded in driving the bear back into so small a covert that even this little force was sufficient to encompass him. The smallness of the circle, however, had one disadvantage: that from being not more than one hundred to one hundred and fifty paces in diameter, it exposed the members of the expedition to considerable danger, every bullet whistling about their ears.

The bear, driven from point to point, at last took refuge in a thick tangled brake near the centre of the ring. Mr. Ullgren advanced towards it twice or thrice with the view

of dislodging him, and several random shots were fired into it with the same object; but Mr. Bruin refused to quit his retreat. After awhile, two of the hunters caught a glimpse of him, and poured into his body, as they thought, the contents of their rifles. Their bullets, taking effect alongside of each other, simply broke one of his fore legs near the shoulder. Subsequently, another man fired at him, but missed.

For a long time everything remained quiet. Mr. Ullgren then proceeded to the spot where the bear had been last seen, and followed his track with the view of again rousing him. The brake was very dense, and as the snow lay heavy on the trees, our huntsman could see only a few feet ahead. Warily and slowly he pushed forward into the ring for about forty feet, when, from a very close thicket, at not more than two feet distance, *Nalce*—the Swedish nickname for a bear—rushed suddenly upon him. His fury was excessive, and he growled awfully. Owing to his proximity when he charged, you see, Mr. Ullgren had no time to fire.

First the bear gave him a blow on the chest, which knocked him backwards into the snow. Then, seeing that he intended to seize his head, or the upper part of his body, Mr. Ullgren thrust the barrel of his gun, as he fell, into the ravenous mouth. Upon this the bear pressed to such a degree that it went down his throat nearly up to the lock, and, consequently, the barrel was much injured by his teeth. With all his might the courageous hunter now kicked the beast so hard upon the head as to compel him actually to disgorge the barrel, and move back a few paces.

This, however, was only a brief relief, for a second time, and with even more fury than before, Nalce rushed upon him. "He laid hold," says Mr. Ullgren, "of my unfortunate legs with his fangs, and, raising himself on his hind feet,

thereby reversing my natural position, he shook me with such vengeance, that my person resembled the clapper of a church-bell when taking part in the performance of a triple bob-major; and, as a consequence, the contents of my kit, consisting of a brandy bottle, bread, a sausage, &c., were scattered here and there in the forest.

"Though the ringing to which the beast subjected me was carried to a most inconvenient extent, I nevertheless retained sufficient presence of mind, suspended by the heels as I was, to give him several blows on the head with my gun, which at length caused him to loose his hold and to retreat.

"Whilst thus suffering tribulation I shouted lustily for help; but, owing to the horrible roarings of the bear, the people did not hear my cries; nor was a comrade, though only at some twenty paces distance when I was first assailed, able, from the thickness of the cover, to reach the scene of action prior to the departure of the beast.

"After leaving me, the bear sprang to the opposite side of the ring, where three shots in the body terminated his existence.

"It proved to be a female, and amongst the largest of the species. Five or six years previously she had been caught in a steel-trap, but contrived to escape with the loss of a paw, which was subsequently brought to me. It was singular enough that, after so long a period, the bear and the amputated member should join company again.

"The beast was very fat, and said to be delicious eating. For my part, however, though she had been so very loving towards me, and made so free with my flesh, I had no inclination to try the flavour of hers."

Bears are sometimes killed in Scandinavia much in the same way as tigers are sometimes killed in India. A kind

of platform is erected at a height of twenty to thirty feet above the ground, between two leafy pines, growing very near each other. It is chiefly constructed of interwoven boughs, and is provided in front with a breastwork, which also serves the purpose of a screen. At times the gäll—for such is its designation—is raised near to the carcass of some animal which has previously been conveyed to the forest; but more generally near the remains of a horse or cow recently slaughtered by Bruin himself,—to which, like the tiger, after he has digested his first meal he is almost sure to return. One would think that to be posted alone in a gäll, with the forest-shades around, and none of one's own kind near at hand, would be rather a disagreeable experience. But the veteran hunter is capable of finding pleasure where others would find only discomfort; and Mr. Lloyd writes of a gäll in quite enthusiastic terms :—"The gloomy solitude of the forest in the night season; the melancholy hootings of the great horned owl, heard ever and anon in the distance; the slaughtered cow lying in a small glade before me, mangled in a dreadful manner by the fangs of the beast; and, to crown the whole, the momentary expectation of the rugged monster making his appearance, tend to keep up the excitement." Upon which outburst my only comment must be, *De gustibus non est disputandum.*

The bear is also captured by means of the common steel-trap, which resembles the trap often set in preserves as a protection against poachers and their dogs, but is of great size and strength, and has its jaws garnished with terrific teeth.

The trap is used chiefly in the spring, when the bear, worn out with his long winter-fast, is prowling about the forest in search of food. Carrion is then left exposed in the places he chiefly frequents, at times within a stoutly-con-

structed fence, forming the two sides of a triangle, and roofed over, so that he can obtain access to it only when it is left open on the third side. A dead horse is the most common bait. The trap having been well rubbed over with gum, or with sprigs of the spruce pine, to remove all taint of the human hand, is set in a cavity in the ground between the fore and the hind legs of the carcass, and as near as may be to the belly, which is the part of the body usually attacked first by wild beasts; afterwards it is lightly covered over with moss, grass, and dead leaves, the herbage all around being disturbed so as to give the whole a uniform appearance.

We find in the she-bear that affection for her young which is a common characteristic of the mammals. How strongly it is exhibited by the Polar bear, you have already heard. In the brown Scandinavian bear it is shown almost as conspicuously, at least in the summer-time; for I must own that her philoprogenitiveness seems to vary with the seasons. But in the summer, when accompanied by her cubs, she becomes exceedingly formidable, and will frequently attack people, instead of waiting to be attacked.

Listen to the tale told by a Swedish peasant:—

One summer morning I was in the forest shooting hares. I was suddenly roused by the sharp, quick bay of one of my dogs, and hastened towards the spot, in the belief that a poacher was visiting my own especial cover, which was situated on the slope of a tolerable eminence, thickly covered both with brushwood and timber trees. On gaining the crest of the hill, I heard an extraordinary cry overhead; and looking up, I descried a couple of young bears perched among the higher branches of a lofty spruce-pine, and, so far as I could see, without their mother. I had no bullets with me, but immediately loaded my double-barrel with

shot, and fired at them, though without bringing them down. With all possible speed I began to reload; but had put in only the powder, when I saw the old mother-bear dashing towards me with astonishing rapidity. When she had approached within about twelve feet of the spot where I stood, she suddenly halted, planted her fore paws on a great fir log, and set up an awful roaring. It was in no small pain, I confess, that I continued reloading my gun, during which time she slowly retreated into the forest; but three or four minutes afterwards I again sighted her, for she had taken up her position in a thick brake at about twenty paces distant. Her left side was towards me, and, taking aim behind her shoulder, I immediately discharged one barrel; whereupon she uttered a terrible growl, and, wheeling about, galloped at full speed up a neighbouring hill-side.

I now supposed I had got quit of her altogether, and certainly her room was more to be desired than her company. But, lo and behold! she returned once more, and still at full speed, making for the tree in which her young were perched. She clambered up the trunk for a little distance, but presently came down again, and backwards, as is customary with the bear. Then she posted herself at the foot of the tree; but I did not venture to approach her, nor did she evince any desire to pay me a second visit. So thus we stood, for a long time, gazing at one another, and each wishing that the other would be the first to retreat. At length, in the hope of driving her away, I gave a lusty blast on my hunting-bugle; but it had no effect; and as it was evident she had made up her mind to hold her ground, I felt compelled to leave her in possession of the honours of war and the guardianship of her cubs.

This incident seems to illustrate very vividly the bear's dogged resolution when called upon to protect her young.

It would be easy to furnish numerous additional examples. As I have said, she does not seem equally courageous in her affection in the winter; though this may be due, as an authority remarks, to "her faculties being in a degree bewildered by her long nap," or perhaps to the decline of her energies necessarily induced by her winter-fast. It is true that when roused from her lair in the winter she shows a manifest unwillingness to abandon her progeny, especially when they are very young; but she seldom makes any effort to defend them, either while still in the lair, or subsequently when afoot. If, when in company with her cubs, she receives a wound, she will often, like other bears, attack the hunter, but not so long as she herself remains uninjured.

Numerous superstitions and absurd fables respecting the bear—as, for instance, that the mother-bear licks her cubs into shape, and that she holds them in her paws to her breast in order to warm them—still linger in remote parts of Scandinavia. It was formerly asserted that if a man went boldly up to an infuriated bear, the latter would be so overpowered by the dignity of the human gaze as to slink away like a whipped hound. No one who knows anything about bears, however, would care to try the experiment! The Lapps think that he is gifted with the strength of twelve men, and that his sagacity is almost supernatural; but all such notions are the growth of the fear inspired by the beast's ferocity.

Here I must conclude my notes for the present, acknowledging your kind attention. Mountjoy, I don't think you have recently joined in our conversation. May I not call upon you?

[Mountjoy expressed his willingness to tell them a story as well as he could, and proceeded to relate the following narrative:—]

AN ALPINE BEAR STORY.

I must transport you, in imagination, (said Mountjoy,) to the deep recesses of the Alps, whose lofty snow-crowned peaks rise upward as if in eternal adoration of their Creator, and whose rugged flanks bristle with the glacier and the avalanche, in witness to his almighty power.

These recesses—such dark, narrow ravines as no stay-at-home Englishman can form any idea of—are clothed with hanging woods, where the lynx lies in wait for the unsuspicious marmot, the fox steals upon the partridge in her nest, the hawk forays among Nature's feathered minstrels, and the vulture often descends from his rocky eyrie in quest of prey.

Some of these savage glens present the traveller with scenes of unimagined and unimaginable grandeur. Fancy a vast castellated wall of rock shooting abruptly to an elevation of a thousand feet. Fancy it draped all over with a magnificent forest of pines, which, in the distance, likens it to a colossal ruin shattered by the ravages of time and circumstance, and softened with thick masses of ivy. Draw nearer, and you find the picture still more charming, and every step reveals some new enchantment, until at length you are lost in the shadow of the mighty trees, whose branches, swept by the wind, ever

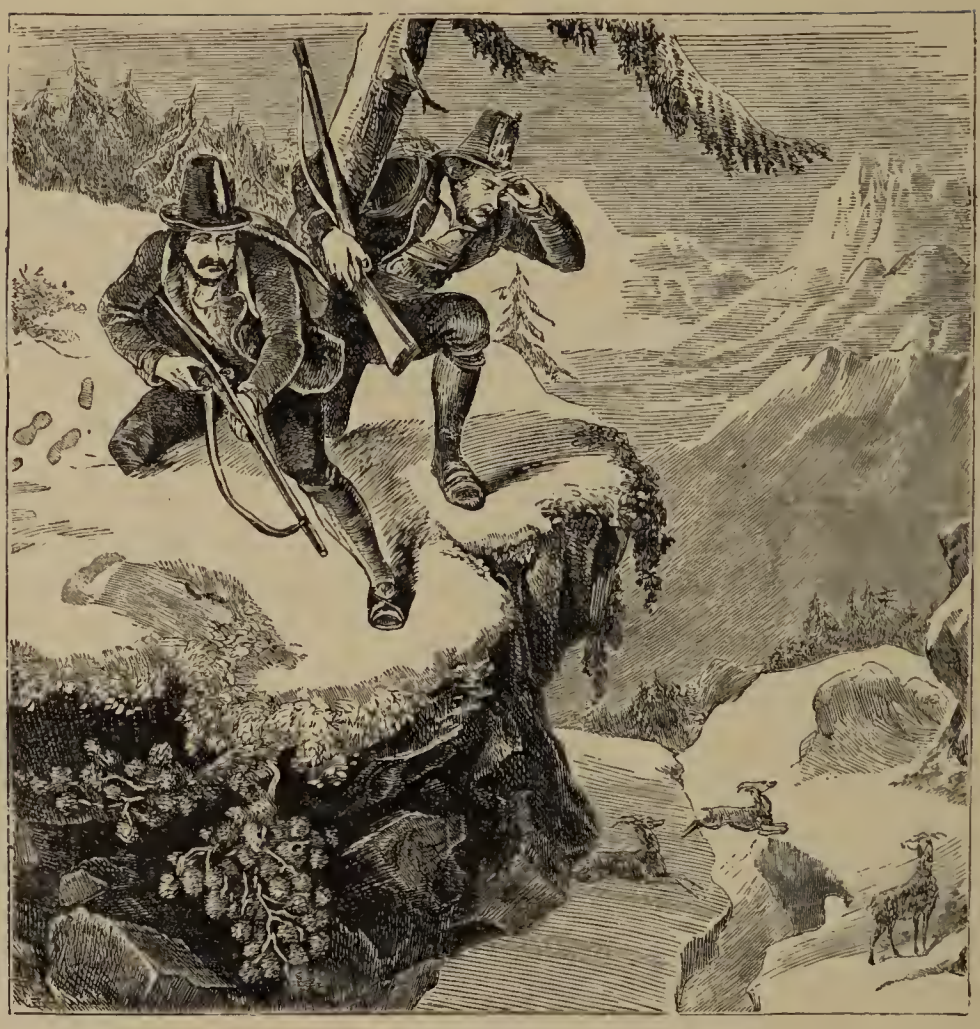
> 'A ceaseless utterance give
> To soothe the fantasies of waking hearts,
> Or lull the dreams of night.'*

Everybody knows that the chamois is a native of the Alps, among whose rocky heights he skips, from ledge to ledge, with incredible agility. He grazes contentedly on the remotest peaks inaccessible even to the goat, as if

* 'Temple Bar,' vol. iii.—'Into the Schafloch.'

Nature had designed him for the sole purpose of consuming the otherwise useless portion of her products. In the winter, when the snow lies thick and hard above the herbage, he descends to the lower grounds, and feeds on the long lichen drooping from the pine-boughs. It is not difficult to tame the young chamois; and when caught, he is first fed with goats' milk, and then with fine grass or cabbage, turnips, and bread. He soon grows docile, follows his master readily, and will even feed from the hand of strangers. The fold in which the Alpine herdsman keeps his little family during the winter is usually constructed of huge stone walls, roofed over, and furnished with a stout timber door, to resist the attacks of wild animals.

Chamois-hunting, I may observe, is not without its dangers. The hunter risks his life at every step; crevices and chasms yawn in his path; mighty avalanches overhang his head; he totters on the brink of awful precipices. Yet there is a fascination in the pursuit which induces him to hazard everything, as the gamester cannot quit the gaming-table as long as he has a coin to stake. Kohl, in his Travels, tells the following story: A hunter, in following up the game, leapt down on a narrow ledge of slate impending over a fearful precipice. As the mouldering stonework began to crumble and yield beneath his weight, he was obliged to lie down on his stomach, and crawl along stealthily. With a small axe he cut away the loose slate in front, and advanced inch by inch, in constant fear of falling. After two hours of incessant labour he observed a fluttering shadow on the face of the rock, and looking up with difficulty, descried a large eagle stooping over him, as if intending to drive him from his frail foothold. But the hunter was a hero at heart, and not easily daunted. Carefully turning on his back, he got his rifle into position



CHAMOIS HUNTING.

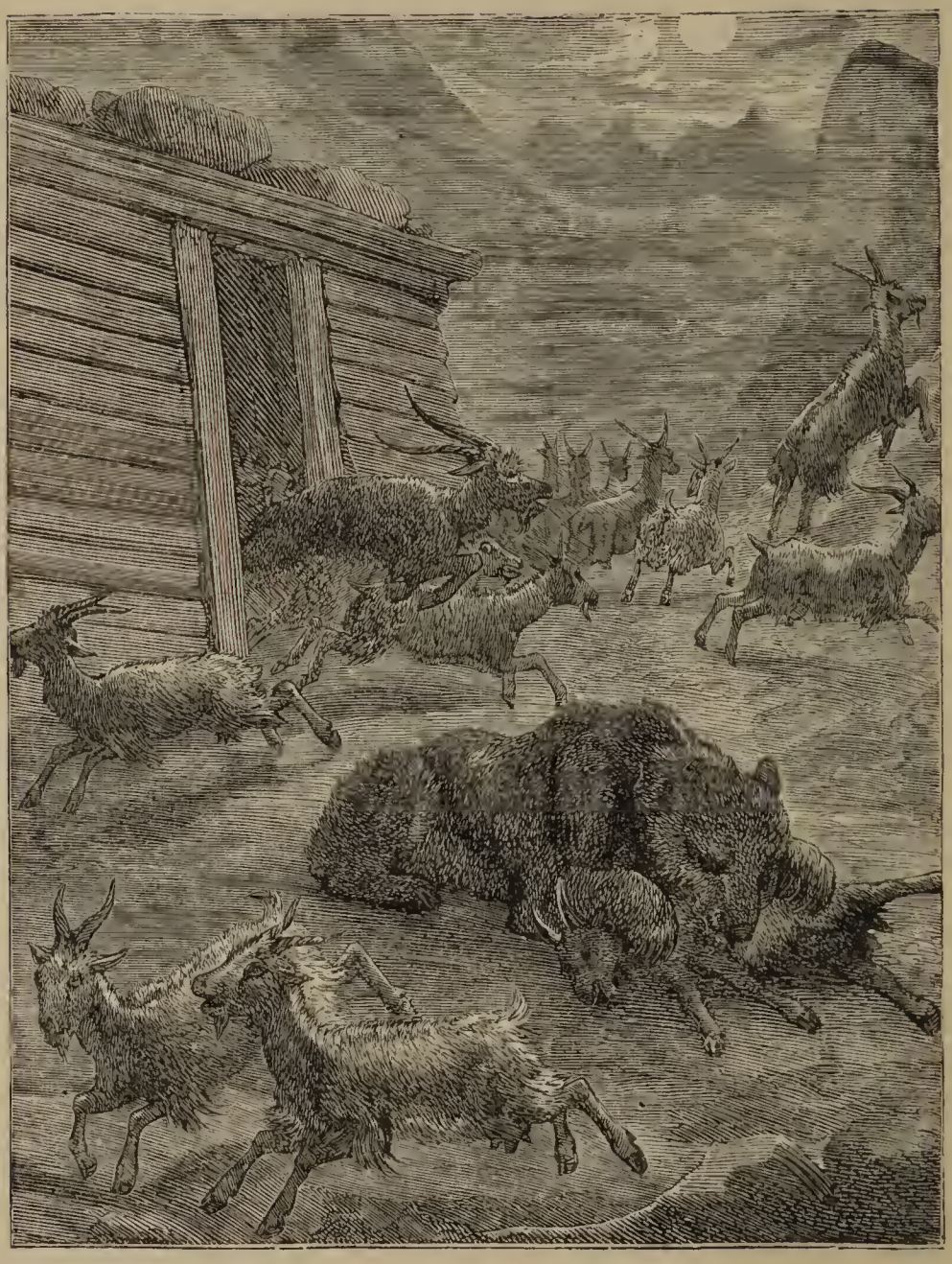
by twining his leg round a projection, and hanging with half his body over the chasm. Thus perilously poised, he watched the eagle until it flew away, and after three hours' suspense and labour, he reached a place of safety.

But I am wandering from my story.

A goat-fold of the kind I have described stood in a sheltered angle of one of the ruggedest mountains of the Rhætian Alps. The herds, in whose charge it was placed, observed, one morning when they visited the spot, that the ground was torn up near the door, the door itself scratched and broken, and the tall grass cropped and partly trodden down.

No injury, however, had been done to the goats; not a kid, not a chamois was wanting. The herds concluded that a wolf or lynx must have been watching at night-time in the vicinity, but they searched the depths of the dark pine-forest without discovering any trace of the intruder. They therefore resolved to establish a watch on the fold all night, and as none of them carried fire-arms, a messenger was despatched to the nearest village to borrow an old musket, with which, duly primed and loaded, he returned before evening.

It was noticed throughout the day that the goats seemed considerably disturbed, and herded closely together. Instead of leaping from crag to crag, and seeking the highest peak in quest of herbage, they loitered about the valleys, and kept company with a herd of cows, with a sort of instinctive feeling that there was safety in numbers. In the evening, it was with the greatest difficulty the herds could drive them into the fold. It was then resolved that two of the herds, armed with the musket, should watch concealed behind a rocky spur, and in case of an alarm, should rouse their comrades, who retired, as usual, to their quiet châlet. For two nights these precautions were observed, and, as it seemed, unnecessarily. On the third night, growing supine because there was no appearance of danger, the watchmen slept. But at midnight they were suddenly aroused by a curious noise. Looking out cautiously from their hiding-place, they discovered the bear hurling his huge bulk against the door of the fold, and at intervals scenting all around the place, as if to find some means of possible ingress. If such was the disturbance without, the noise within the fold was still more alarming; for the poor goats, aware of the proximity of a bloodthirsty enemy, bleated in a very agony of alarm, and the bells of their leaders made a horrid clang



THE BITER BIT.

as they moved frantically to and fro in their restless efforts to escape. The two herdsmen were dismayed, and at a loss how to act, for the brown bear is no despicable foe, unless you are well armed and a good marksman. So one of the herds ran off to summon assistance, and the other hid himself behind a rock, and endeavoured to get his gun in order.

Meanwhile, the bear, after repeated efforts, succeeded in driving in the door of the fold. Out, in terror and confusion, one upon another, poured the bleating goats, and clambered wildly up the nearest rocks. The bear darted in, secured a victim, and, dragging it forth, began his banquet. At this moment the goat-herds came rushing down from the châlet, armed with clubs, pitchforks, and such other weapons as had presented themselves in the emergency. Happily there was among them—or some sad disaster might have occurred—a veteran chamois-hunter, who immediately seized the old musket, and with one successful shot brought down the bear—a brown bear, which was found to weigh two hundred and fifty pounds.

["And that is my story, boys."

"A very good story, too," remarked Fisher.

"What cowards those fellows were," said Douglas contemptuously, "not to have pitched into Bruin when they first saw him, and before he got into the fold! I thought those Alpine fellows had more pluck."

"They would have faced all the risks of mountaineering," said Seymour, "without a momentary fear. Most of us can brave the dangers with which we are familiar, but when peril comes in an unaccustomed shape, the heart of the boldest will sometimes shrink. I don't think they wanted courage, but something much rarer than courage—presence of mind."

"Yes; and, as Mountjoy observed," continued Fisher, "the brown bear is a dangerous antagonist. I remember to have read of a bear which, on a certain occasion, was attacked by a party of hunters, and wounded by one of them. The animal, infuriated by the pain, rushed upon the nearest, who could only check his onslaught by thrusting his musket into the animal's jaws. The bear, however, bit

it in two, and flung it away; then seized upon the unfortunate hunter, wounded him severely, and laid him prostrate. At this moment another of the party rushed at the animal with his axe, but he too was brought to the ground. After he fell, the bear put his paw on his breast, turned him over, and, finding that he still breathed, killed him. Then he turned to his other victim, who, knowing that bears will not touch a dead body, buried his face in the snow and lay motionless, simulating death. Whereupon the beast, deceived, left him alone, and retreated. He was shortly afterwards pursued by a company of six well-armed hunters, but though wounded in the head, he fought desperately, until a couple of shots in the heart put an end to his life."

"Do you remember," said Seymour, who, well versed as he was in English poetry, was not less well acquainted with his Bible, "David's victory over the bear? Wait a minute; I have a pocket Bible in my great-coat; ah, here it is. Now, then, let us see how it took place:—

"'Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine'" (1 Sam. xvii. 34–37).

"It was the brown bear," rejoined Fisher, "with which David fought, so that we may wonder all the more at his astonishing victory. It seems to be agreed among naturalists that he was at one time an inhabitant of our own

island, and that the Caledonian bears were imported by the Romans to figure in their public games. For many generations, however, the race has been extinct in Britain, and as our ancestors delighted in bear-baiting—both nobles, burghers, and artisans—they were compelled to purchase live animals on the Continent, or breed them as, now-a-days, our gentry breed dogs. When Queen Elizabeth paid her famous visit to the great Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth, a bear-bait was one of the dainty pastimes which the powerful noble set before his sovereign. In the Earl of Northumberland's Household-Book, preserved at Penshurst, we read of a payment of 20s. to his bear-ward, or bear-keeper. In Southwark there was a regular bear-garden, much frequented by the London citizens."

"I think I have heard," said Douglas, "that no beast is fiercer than a bear who *has* been robbed of her young."

"Such is the strength of maternal affection," exclaimed Seymour; "and so Solomon, when he would furnish an image of a thoroughly desperate man, says, 'Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly' (Prov. xvii. 12). And Hushai says to Absalom, 'Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field'" (2 Sam. xvii. 8).

"The bear," remarked Fisher, "is wondrously careful of her young. When going in search of food, or when she apprehends danger, she conceals them safely among the leafy branches of a tree, and goes forth alone to encounter her foe. A hunter, who had slain a she-bear, heard a rustling noise in a neighbouring tree, and looking up, lo, two little cubs were timorously looking at him through the green rustling leaves. No hunter who understands his craft will kill a whelp in the sight of her mother, for then her passions

rise to madness, and she will fling herself without fear upon half a dozen rifles. Even if robbed of her young ones in her absence, she can track the robber by the keenness of her scent; regardless of all danger to herself, she will dog his footsteps like grim Death; and if she gets sight of him, woe's me! no swiftness of flight can save him, for the bear can run rapidly, can swim the broadest and most violent river, can climb the loftiest forest-tree, and will only abandon her revenge in death!"

"Of the Polar Bear," said Douglas, "I think I remember a few anecdotes; but I do not know whether you will care to hear them."

On this point Douglas was speedily re-assured; and when Seymour had taken a careful survey of the line, both up and down, to convince himself that no succour was at hand, the lad began:—]

ABOUT THE POLAR BEAR.

A very queer animal is this said Polar Bear (*Thalassarctos maritimus*), for he is as white as the snows among which he lives, except the tip of his nose and his claws, which are jet black. He will eat roots and berries of any kind, and yet he best loves the oleaginous flesh of seals, the carcasses of whales, and such fish as the Polar Seas afford. He is an admirable angler, by the way, and a capital hunter: hares and birds have much ado to escape him, while he traps the seal in a remarkably skilful manner.* Thus: on seeing his intended prey, he steals softly into the water, and swims until he gets to leeward of him, from whence, by frequent short dives, he silently advances nearer and nearer, so arranging his distance that, at the last dive, he comes to

* Scoresby, 'Arctic Regions;' Capt. Lyon, 'Narrative of Voyage in Search of a North-West Passage;' Voyages by Ross, Parry, and M'Clintock.

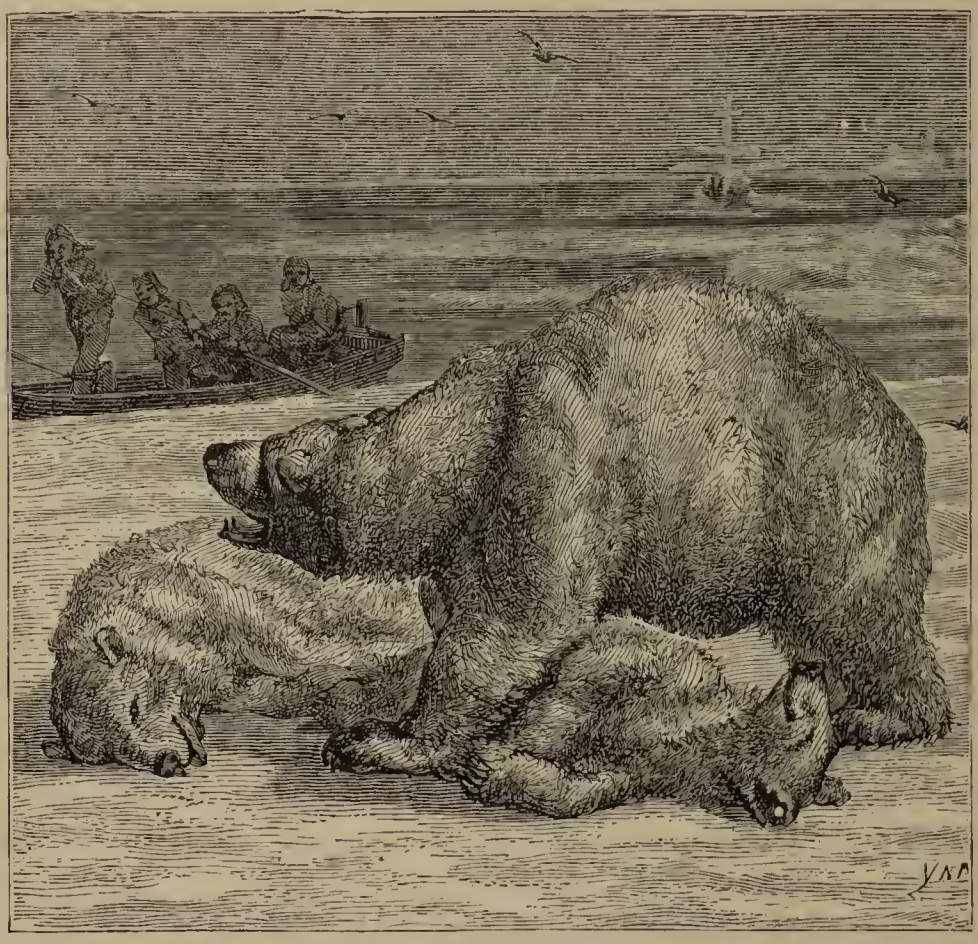
the spot where the seal is lying. If the poor animal attempts to escape by rolling into the water, he falls into Bruin's clutches; if, on the contrary, he retains his position, the destroyer makes a powerful spring, kills him on the ice, and devours him at leisure.

The Polar bear, (continued Douglas,) lives during the summer—that brief but brilliant Arctic summer—on the ice islands which stud the half-frozen main, swimming from one to another with great speed and dexterity. Here the masses of ice, piled one upon another as if by the hands of giants, form numerous caverns, and afford them a secure asylum for their young.

The white bear is no less ardent in her maternal solicitude than her brown congener, and will risk her own life rather than forsake her young. A curious illustration may be given of this admirable instinct. Some of our British sailors, belonging to a discovery-ship which the ice had caught fast in its iron grasp, had kindled a fire on the frozen plain, and were roasting at it some pieces of walrus-flesh. Attracted by a smell peculiarly grateful to their olfactory organs, a white bear and her two young ones approached the fire, rushed suddenly on the roast, snatched it away, and greedily devoured it. The sailors thereupon threw them several more pieces of flesh, which the mother-bear seized and divided between her young ones, scarcely tasting any herself. While they were eating, some of the seamen fired, shot both the cubs quite dead, and wounded the mother.

She was so sorely hurt that she could scarcely move, yet, disregarding her own wound, she seemed to care only for her young ones. She laid pieces of the flesh before them, as if to entice them to rise and eat, and when they did not stir attempted to raise them, but in vain. Dragging herself to a little distance, she uttered the most melancholy cries,

as if entreating them to follow her. When this, too, proved in vain, she returned and made another effort to raise them. At length, all her tender wiles proving unsuccessful, she seemed to understand that they were dead, and that the



MATERNAL SOLICITUDE.

sailors were the cause. Suddenly raising her head, and howling with rage, she dashed furiously towards the ship. A volley of shot arrested her career, and, mortally wounded, she sunk down and died beside her young, licking their wounds as long as life remained.

Who does not know the story of Nelson and his encounter with the bear? When a young middy, about fifteen years old, he went in the *Racehorse* on a voyage of discovery towards

the North Pole. The good ship was for some time embedded in the ice, and could not be set free from her thrall. Young Nelson determined on an adventure, and one night during mid-watch stole from the vessel with one of his comrades, taking advantage of a gathering fog, and started over the ice in pursuit of a bear. It was not long before they were missed. The fog thickened, and Captain Lutwidge and his officers became alarmed for their safety. Between three and four in the morning the weather cleared, and the two adventurers were descried, at a considerable distance from the ship, attacking a huge Polar bear. The return-signal was immediately hoisted; Nelson's comrade called upon him to obey it, but in vain; yet his musket had flashed in the pan, their ammunition was expended, and a chasm in the ice, which divided him from the bear, probably preserved his life. 'Never mind,' he cried; 'do but let me get a blow at this devil with the butt-end of my musket, and we shall have him.' Captain Lutwidge, however, seeing his danger, fired a gun, which had the intended effect of frightening the beast; and the boy then returned, somewhat alarmed at the reception he might meet with from his commander. The captain contented himself with a severe reprimand, and desired to know what could be his motive for hunting a bear. 'Sir,' said Nelson, pouting his lip, as he was wont to do when agitated, 'I wished to kill the bear that I might carry the skin to my father!'

["That was the true hero-spirit of the future victor of Trafalgar," said Seymour; "and the anecdote shows how the boyhood of an individual prefigures, as it were, his manhood, and how from the qualities he exhibits in early life we may judge what will be the more prominent characteristics of his after-career. I suppose a virtuous youth always foretokens—or nearly always—an honourable and honoured manhood."

"Your remark," said Fisher, "reminds me of the poet's lines,—

'The child is father of the man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.' *

I suspect that most great men have given promise of their greatness in early youth. But, *revenons à moutons*, as the French say."

"I don't understand," said Douglas, "how the bear procures food during its winter sleep."

"You mean," said Fisher, "while *hybernating;* for the bear does not sleep, as is evident from the fact that she produces young and nourishes them while immured in her subnivean asylum. And it is the she-bear alone which hybernates, for the male roams about just as in the brief Polar summer. Now, having feasted plentifully before retiring to her winter-quarters, she is loaded with fat, and this supplies her with food until the return of spring."

"But what has her fat to do with it? Lambert," said Douglas, "is fatter than I am, but he grows hungry just as soon. If a fat man were kept for a time without food, would he not die of starvation?"]

HYBERNATING.

There is no analogy, (replied Fisher,) between a fat man and a fat bear. In the man the functions of life are incessantly at work, even during sleep; and he would soon be exhausted if he did not recruit his strength with fresh material. But in the bear the mind does not act upon the brain; the whole system is in a state of repose; life is partially suspended; all the corporeal powers are in abeyance; and as no waste of substance takes place, no fresh

* Wordsworth 'Poetical Works.'

supplies are needed. The action of the heart is so gentle that it can scarcely be observed; the respiration is very faint; and the temperature of the body considerably diminished.

It has justly been observed that few physiological problems are more curious than this principle of hybernation. It is more than sleep, yet less than death; it is not coma, or complete unconsciousness; and it does not resemble a swoon. It is limited to a few species of vertebrated animals, and equally affects the vegetable feeders and the carnivora, as may be seen in our own country, where we have the bat, the hedgehog, the squirrel, and the dormouse.

It usually takes place—as the scientific term indicates—in winter; yet it is no consequence or result of cold, for all hybernators invariably withdraw to some warm and sheltered locality before they pass into this singular phase of existence. Indeed, an animal when hybernating is at first aroused by decrease of temperature; and if the diminution becomes excessive, it will perish with the cold.

In the Tropics the effect of the hottest and driest weather is to reduce the numbers of the insect world, and consequently insectivorous mammals and reptiles would die of hunger were they not able to pass into a state of inactivity or torpidity, and so maintain life until the recommencement of the rainy season.

'Animals,' says a well-known scientific authority,* 'so highly organized as the warm-blooded and quick-breathing mammalia cannot maintain their complicated organic machinery in action without frequent supplies of food; an interruption in this respect of a few days, or at most a few weeks, is fatal. If, therefore, the phenomenon of hybernation had been known only in the cold-blooded classes, an in-

* Brande, 'Dictionary of Science, Literature, and Art.'

sectivorous mammal in a climate where insects could not subsist for several months in the year would be inconceivable. The modification of the vital powers by which a warm-blooded animal is made even temporarily to assume the state and properties of a reptile, is perhaps one of the most striking instances of special adaptations to meet an exceptional case that the history of animals presents. When the earth becomes vacant of insect life, when the bat, in its nocturnal flittings, would vainly traverse it in search of food, and when the few insects that survive the winter have burrowed too deeply in the earth, or concealed themselves in hiding-places too secure for the reach of the hedgehog,—these species, with starvation staring them in the face, are preserved by the suspension of those functions, the maintenance of which in a state of activity is essentially dependent on an uninterrupted supply of nutriment. The bat suspends itself in the innermost recesses of its cave, the hedgehog creeps to its concealed nest, and both resign themselves to deep repose ; but the breathing becomes gradually slower than in ordinary sleep, the pulsations of the heart diminish in force and frequency, the supply of stimulating arterial blood to the muscles and the brain is progressively reduced, relaxation of the muscular fibres is converted into stiff inaction, and sleep sinks into stupor ; at length respiration entirely ceases, and with it those chemical changes in the capillary circulation on which animal heat mainly depends. The preservation of life, in its passive or latent state, is now due to the irritable property of the heart's fibre, which is excited to contract by the present dark or carbonised state of the blood, and continues to propel it slowly over the torpid frame during the whole period of hybernation. This slow circulation of venous blood through both the pulmonic and systemic vessels is the only recognizable vital act during

that period, and the material conveyed by the absorbents into the circulating fluid is sufficient to counterbalance the slight waste thus occasioned. So long, therefore, as the state of torpidity continues, the hedgehog and bat are independent of supplies from without, but they purchase that independence by a temporary abrogation of their vital faculties.'

["Oh, come, Fisher," exclaimed Mountjoy, "give us something a little more intelligible. I declare Lambert has fallen asleep."

"No," said Seymour, with a humorous twinkle of his bright dark eyes, "he is only *hybernating!* But I tell you what it is, boys, you ought to be much obliged to Fisher for his luminous—"

"*Vo*-luminous, you mean," cried Beauchamp.

"Good; but the jest is Sheridan's. Well, Fisher's explanation was clever and laborious, and I, for one, have been greatly interested by it."

"So have I," rejoined Beauchamp; "but now, for the sake of the youngsters, let us have a turn at story-telling."

"A bear-hunt in the Polar Regions," said Seymour, "must be an exciting pastime. The cold gray sky above, all around masses of ice or snowy mountains, gleaming with a keen wintry light—the monotonous level of the frozen sea only broken at intervals by channels of deep water—what more do you need of the picturesque or romantic? I remember reading in Captain Hall's book, 'Life with the Esquimaux'—a capital book of adventure, lads, and replete with curious experiences of arctic life—an account of a bear-hunt in which the bold mariner played a conspicuous part."

"Tell us the story, Seymour," exclaimed Vernon.

"I fear I do not remember it; but—"

"I have it here in my manuscript," cried Fisher. "I borrowed the book from a library to which my father subscribes,

and copied out some passages which greatly interested me."

"There now, Fisher," cried the Fat Boy, "what an industrious fellow you are! I can't think how you and Seymour find time for so much reading. Well, there, it puzzles *me*."

"*Nulla dies sine lineâ*," said Seymour; "that's the secret. Every day read a little, *however* little, and at the year's end you will be surprised at the amount of information you have gathered up."

"Come, Fisher, read out the bear-hunt," said Mountjoy.

"This is Captain Hall's account," said Fisher. "He appears to have been travelling over the ice in lat. 63° 20′ N., long. 68° W. nearly."]

A BEAR HUNT.

'While we pursued our journey down the channel,' says our authority,* 'an exciting scene occurred. A Polar bear, with its cub, was observed on the ice near the base of a bold high mountain. Immediately the dogs were stopped and the guns loaded. Koojesse [an Esquimaux] forgot that he was lame and sick, and came forward eagerly to join in the hunt; while for myself, with telescope in hand, I watched the bear's movements. As soon as all was ready, we let slip the dogs. They soon caught sight of the prey, and joyously bounded forward. While drawing our sledge along with great rapidity, and when within about four hundred yards, the leader's draught-line was cut, and away he dashed in pursuit of the bear. Then another and another of the running dogs was cut loose and despatched in chase, until all were in full cry after the bear.

'The bear, with her cub following, made her way over the broken ice between the main ice and the shore, direct for the steep snow-covered flank of the mountain, which she

* Captain C. F. Hall, 'Life with the Esquimaux,' ed. 1865.

immediately began to ascend. One of the dogs had now overtaken them, and instantly attacked the cub, until they separated it from its mother. Then another dog leaped at the hinder quarters of the old bear, which turned and made a plunge at its assailant, causing both to topple down the declivity, which was so abrupt that I wondered how either could have clomb it.

'The fight now became earnest, and the dog yelped with pain, as Bruin's paw fell heavily upon him. Presently the bear was compelled to turn again, and, with head swinging to and fro, and roaring plaintively on hearing the cries of her cub, she clambered up the mountain to a point where neither man nor dog could follow. The eleven dogs then darted after the cub, which was part way up the mountain-side; and as one seized it, over rolled cub and dog together, and so came tumbling down. While Koojesse and Sharkey were trying to get a shot at the old bear, I went forward,' says Captain Hall, 'to watch the affray between the young Polar and the dogs. On making my way from the main ice to the shore, the cub rushed at me with jaws widely distended. I instantly placed myself in a position to receive the threatened shock. I received young Polar on the point of my spear, having directed it well towards the neck, and pierced it through. The dogs immediately flew to my aid, and soon threw the savage beast upon its back. On my withdrawing the spear, a stream of hot blood spouted forth; and then, with heavy blows on its head, I broke in the skull, and killed it. I concluded that my Jannit friends would greatly rejoice at my success, but I soon found that such an idea was erroneous. On showing them what I had done, they shrugged their shoulders, and said nothing. Of course I was surprised, and could not comprehend their conduct. But I soon learned the *mistake* I had made in killing the

young bear. This I ascertained in the following way: While Koojesse and Sharkey were engaged skinning *ar-tuk-ta* (young Polar bear), I proposed to them that we should encamp for the night where we were. To this they positively objected, for, they said, the old bear would return in the night, and, smelling the blood of her young one, would be enraged to madness, and kill the whole party. Furthermore, they said that their people always avoided killing the young of a Bruin till the old one was dead, because the death of her offspring invariably made the mother a hundredfold more terrible than she otherwise would be.'

And therefore Captain Hall was constrained to turn in a different direction, and travel onwards for a mile or so, before he could encamp for the night.

["Very good," remarked Douglas, when Fisher had concluded; "but not very exciting."

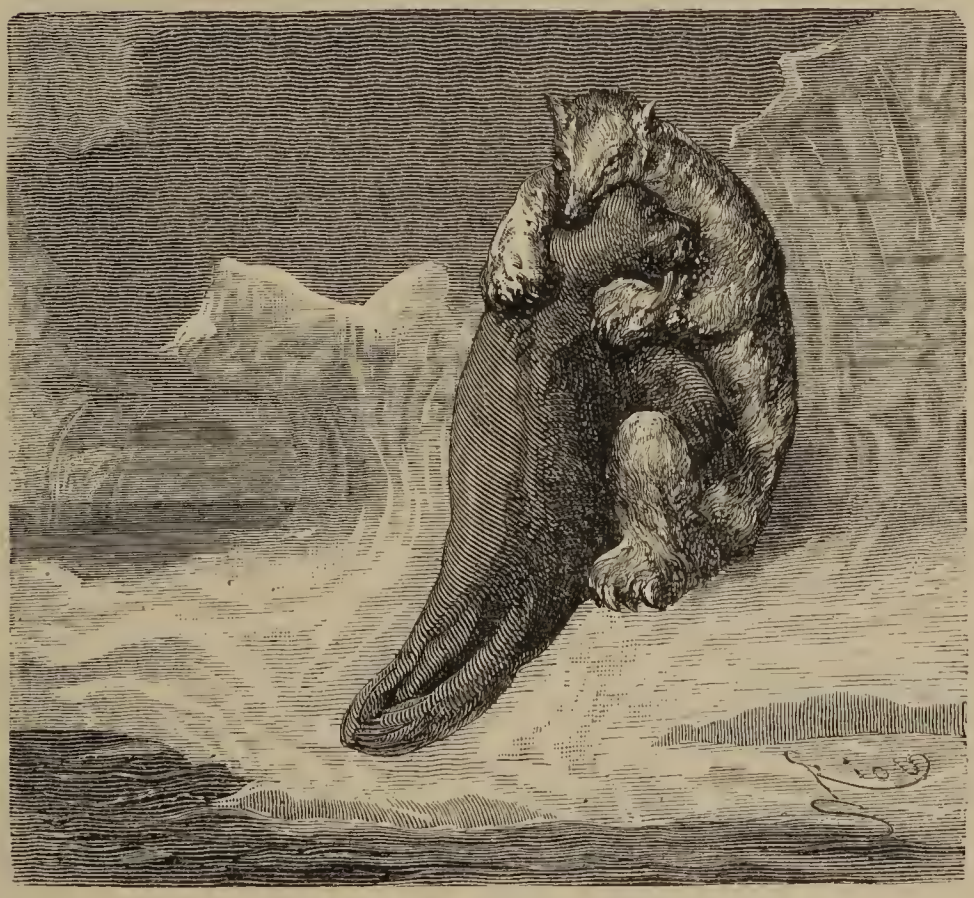
"Youths," observed Seymour, with mock solemnity, "beware how you are led away by the prevailing mania for the sensational! 'Truth is strange; stranger than fiction.'"

"The Polar bear," resumed Fisher, "must be an Artful Dodger! Just listen to a trick of his. He wants to catch a seal, and makes use of the young one as a bait. With his keen scent he discovers where a seal's *igloo*, or burrow, has been built under the snow. He then retires a few paces, runs and springs with all his weight upon the glittering dome, breaks it down, thrusts in his paw, and seizes the young seal. Then, holding it by one of its hind flippers, he clears away all the snow from the seal-hole leading up through the ice into the igloo, and afterwards allows the young one to flounder about in the water. When the old seal comes up, the bear draws the young one stealthily towards him, till the anxious mother is brought gradually within reach, when he seizes her with his disengaged paw."

"That's clever," remarked Mountjoy; "the bear seems to have more *nous* than the lion."

"Perhaps," added Fisher, "because necessity sharpens his wits, for he does not get his food so easily as the monarch of the African wilds."

"The bear has an ingenious way of killing the walrus. Every fine day, in the brief Arctic summer, the walrus



A WARM EMBRACE.

makes its way to the shore, draws his huge bulk up on the rocks, and basks in the sunshine. If he enjoys his siesta near the base of a cliff, mark how Bruin takes advantage of it. He mounts to the summit of the cliff, and hurls at the animal's head a huge rock, calculating the aim and the distance with wonderful accuracy, and thus crushing the thick bullet-proof skull.

"Should the walrus be simply stunned, not killed, the bear rushes down to it, seizes the rock, and hammers away at its victim's cranium until the bone is driven in. A rich feast follows. Unless the bear is very hungry, he eats only the blubber of the walrus, seal, and whale.

"The walrus, I may add, is an 'awkward customer,' to use a pugilistic expression, and unless taken by surprise, would give the bear some trouble. It swims very rapidly; its strength is great; and it is armed with two enormous tusks in the upper jaw, with which it inflicts very ugly wounds. These tusks, which are directed downwards, are sometimes two feet long, and produce a species of ivory that is held in great esteem. It is said, however, to be an animal of far less intelligence than the seal, which it closely resembles in organization. It feeds on shell-fish and marine vegetables, though not entirely abstaining from carnivorous habits. Its scientific name is *Trichecus*, and it forms a genus of the *Phocidæ* or seal family."]

THE SIBERIAN BEAR.

Of the Siberian bear, (continued Fisher,) some interesting details are furnished by a credible authority.* The inhabitants nourish as many superstitions respecting him as the Indians of North America. They believe the bear to be a fallen man, condemned for his sins to pass through the animal shape, but during his metamorphosis still retaining something of his human disposition and inclination. They suppose him able at times, and under certain conditions, to resume his original form and nature, though only for a short time and at infrequent intervals.

Perhaps this superstitious awe is due to the bear's superior sagacity, his wonderful instinct, and his love for

* Col. Lach Szyrma, 'Revelations of Siberia.'

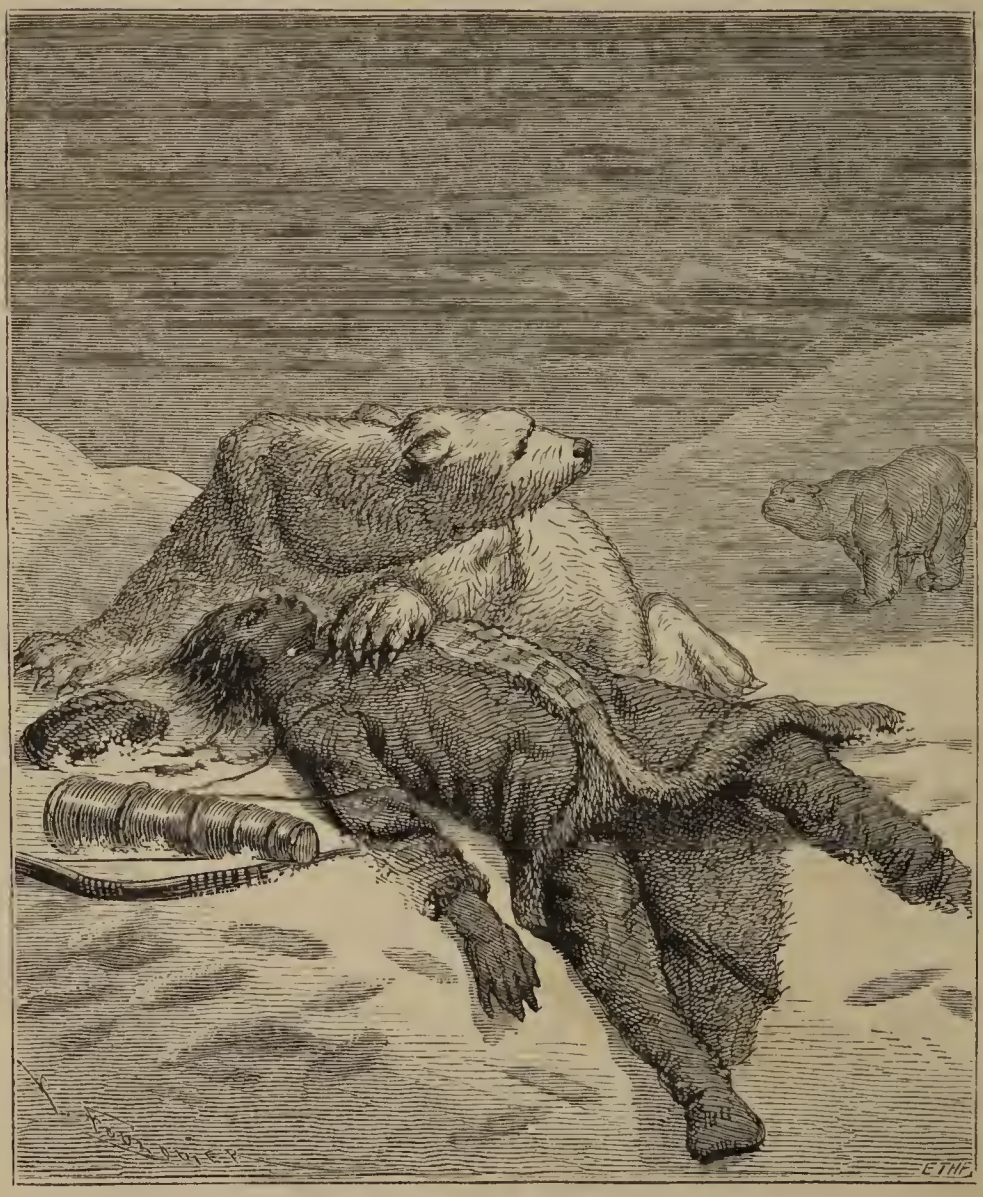
his offspring. The Kamschatdales confessed to Captain Cook that to this animal they owed almost all their science. 'They own themselves indebted,' says the great navigator, 'for all their knowledge of physic and surgery; for, by observing what herbs the bears have applied to the wounds they have received, and what methods they have pursued when they were languid and out of order, they have acquired a knowledge of most of those simples which they have now recourse to, either as external or internal applications.

The Laplanders are equally respectful to their ancient enemy. While hunting him to the death with cruel spears, they chant a sort of palinodia, beseeching him not to injure them, and to take no offence at their persecution. The reindeer that carries home the slaughtered Bruin is looked upon as sacred for a year, and enjoys during that time an immunity from work. And while they banquet heartily on his flesh, they do not forget to bespatter him with the most fulsome praise; just as a man will extol the good qualities of the neighbour whom, perhaps, he has helped to ruin!

A story is told by Sir John Richardson * of an old Indian and his wife who, while lounging on the bank of a narrow stream, suddenly discovered, to their surprise and dismay, an immense bear on the other side regarding them with curious looks. The Indian had neither bow nor spear. He could not fight. To run would have been certain destruction. In this dilemma he and his wife flung themselves upon their knees. 'Oh, venerable sir,' said he, 'I never injured you; I have always admired and esteemed you and your relations; be good enough to retire, sir, and do us no harm.' And the bear actually withdrew, in obedience, as the Indians believed, to this touching appeal.

["Oh come," said Douglas, "are we to believe *that?*"

* Sir J. Richardson, 'Fauna Boreali Americana.'



A LIVING CORPSE.

"Certainly," replied Fisher; "Sir J. Richardson is an authority worthy of all credit."

"I have heard," said Mountjoy, "a curious story about the grisly bear, which may be called the Sexton or Grave-digger of the Animal World, from his partiality for burying whatever dead body he meets with. A hunter, overtaken by this animal, will fling himself on the earth, and pretend to be dead; whereupon the bear sets to work, digs out a

grave, rolls the sham dead man into it, and piles the earth over him. Then he retires, and after a while the living corpse makes his way out of his singular asylum."

"A capital stratagem!" exclaimed Seymour, "but to execute it one need possess remarkable presence of mind, and great self-control. I suppose that the least movement would betray the deception to the bear, and then, what a singularly uncomfortable position one would be in! Talking of uncomfortable positions, by the way, reminds me of a famous story which I read—or heard—some time ago. But it is not about the grisly bear; the hero is the great *black bear* of India — a terrible fellow, strong, ferocious, and sanguinary—and as awkward an antagonist as the sportsman could hope to meet with."*]

THE OLD SHEKARRY'S STORY.

The Old Shekarry was a famous hunter, and many a beast of prey had fallen before his deadly rifle. Having heard of a black bear which had committed terrible ravages in the vicinity of his encampment, he resolved to put an end to its destructive career, and set out, with his attendants, to discover its lair.

After some hours of patient exploration, they arrived at the edge of a bare rocky ravine, denuded of the dense bush that covered most of the country. It seemed a likely spot for the bear's retreat, and so it chanced that on a patch of soil his footprints, evidently very recent, could clearly be distinguished. The hunter followed up the trail for some distance, but lost it on the rocky ground, and was trying in various directions to recover it, when the dogs, which had swept ahead, gave tongue, and shortly afterwards a sullen roar was heard, followed by four or five dropping shots.

* The Old Shekarry—'Hunting-Grounds of the Old World.'

Springing upon a rocky crag, the Old Shekarry descried a huge bear in full pursuit of four or five of the natives, who were running up the hill-side about two hundred yards distant, and shrieking loudly. One of these unfortunates in his wild haste fell over a stone, and in a moment the bear was upon him.

Perceiving his peril, the hunter did not pause to consider the chances of a shot at so long a range, but raised his rifle and fired. The first bullet fell short, but a second was more successful, and the bear, with a cry of pain, abandoned the fallen man, and rushed after the other fugitives, until, confronted by a straggling volley from some of the Shekarry's attendants, he dashed straight into the shelter of a neighbouring bush.

As soon as the Shekarry had satisfied himself that the wounded native was not dangerously hurt, he resumed his pursuit of the bear. That he had penetrated into the underwood was certain, but none of the dogs would be persuaded to follow and rouse him out. Finding that nothing could be effected with their assistance, he posted all the people in secure positions at one end of the cover, and proceeded to follow up the trail alone.

He peered through the bush, but nothing was visible. He then rested his rifle against the trunk of a tree, and began to climb it, so as to obtain a better look around. Scarcely had he raised himself a couple of feet, when, with a tremendous roar, the brute, which had scented him, made a headlong rush. Owing to a thick screen of bush and bramble he could not get at his intended victim very easily, but had to make a turn, which enabled the Shekarry to seize his rifle, and when the bear's head, with its flashing eyes and open jaws, appeared about a couple of paces from him, to pour in the contents of both his barrels. The discharge almost stunned him, for he span round and round, and gave

his assailant time to salute him with his smooth-bore, both bullets taking effect in his head, though such was his wonderful tenacity of life that he contrived to tear out of the cover, rolling over and over as he went.

Having cautiously re-loaded, the Shekarry followed him, and found him lying on the earth in his death agony, moaning piteously. As he got out of the bush he again caught sight of his enemy, and attempted a second headlong charge at him, reeling from side to side as he went; but another bullet in the head made him bite the dust. He rose again, and sat up on his hind legs, as if to look around, and a hideous object he appeared in this position, standing, as he did, with his fore paws raised about seven feet high, and the blood pouring freely from his mouth. The Shekarry now aimed at his broad chest, and Bruin finally fell to the ground, motionless and inanimate. He proved to be a bear of uncommon size, standing four feet high at the shoulder, and weighing not less than eight hundred pounds.

So much for the Old Shekarry's adventure.

[After a brief pause, Fisher observed that during the vacation he had read Mr. Lamont's striking book of travel,* and had collected from its pages some accounts of adventures with Polar bears. "I had overlooked these extracts," he remarked, "when we before discussed this branch of our subject; but here is one illustrating the remarkable affection of the bear for its young, which, I am sure, will interest you."]

A PATHETIC INCIDENT.

Mr. Lamont and his friend, Lord David Kennedy, were reposing in their cabins when word was passed through the vessel that three bears had been discovered on a small mass of floating ice, not many hundred yards distant. They

* J. Lamont, 'Seasons with Sea-Horses.'

aroused themselves instantly, ensconced themselves in the usual garments, ordered a boat to be manned, and rowed in pursuit of the bears. At length they were found seated on a strip of land ice. Lord Kennedy agreed to disembark, and by running, to cut them off from the hills, while Mr. Lamont continued in the boat, and rowed as rapidly as possible to the edge of the ice, to prevent their taking to the sea. The sportsmen got within five hundred yards of their game before they were perceived. Then did the old one rise on her hind legs like a dancing bear, to obtain a good view of the boat, and a moment's inspection seemed to convince her that danger was at hand. With all speed, therefore, she and her cubs scurried along the smooth surface of the ice, with a speed, in fact, which out-distanced Lord Kennedy, and compelled him to get into the boat again. To keep in sight of the bears, the oarsmen rowed with might and main; but they increased their distance, and it seemed probable would effect their escape, when they arrived at the tongue of ice, and before them spread a great expanse of soft mud, broken up with numerous little channels and much rough ice, which brought them to a temporary stand-still. As the cubs could not jump over the channels, the old bear was compelled to wait while they swam them—a tedious operation; but she never lost her temper, and affectionately assisted them to clamber up the steep sides of the rocky places. The mixture of adhesive mud with rough ice and half-congealed water soon reduced the unfortunate cubs to a pitiable state of distress, and they might be heard growling plaintively, as if they were upbraiding their mother for beguiling them into so disagreeable a position.

Having guided their boat into a long narrow creek in the mud where the water was of tolerable depth, the sportsmen now gained rapidly upon the bears; but suddenly the

boat ran hard aground, and no effort of the men could move her one inch ahead. The bears, therefore, seemed again to be having the best of it, as there was no likelihood of overtaking them afoot among the mud; but there still remained the chances of a long shot, as the animals were not two hundred yards distant. Lord David fired, and struck the old bear in the back, paralyzing her; then the hunters toiled through the half-frozen mud to the spot where she lay, and despatched her The cubs, black with mud, and shivering with cold, lay upon their mother's body, and would not be moved, until the men, bringing a couple of walrus-lines from the boat, threw nooses over their heads and secured them tightly, coupling them together like a brace of dogs. They were about the size of Scotch collies; and no sooner did they feel themselves fast, than, quite regardless of the presence of their captors, they began a furious combat with one another, and wallowed in the mud, biting, struggling, and roaring, till quite exhausted.

The affection which the parent bear displays for its young is, apparently, not reciprocated on *their* part. For no sooner had Mr. Lamont's boatmen opened the she-bear for the purpose of skinning her, than the cubs, forgetting their differences with one another, amicably turned their attention to the unexpected feast, and made a hearty meal off their generous and devoted parent!

'Oh, sharper than a serpent's tooth, it is,
To have a thankless—cub!'

When the skinning process was completed, the cubs sat down upon the skin, and absolutely refused to leave it, so they dragged the skin, with the cubs sitting on it, like a sledge, to the boat, and after another wrestle with them, in the course of which they severely bit and scratched some of

the men, they were tied down under the thwarts of the boat, and conveyed on board Mr. Lamont's yacht.

["I suppose," said Beauchamp, "there are not many Polar bears left now, among the icy wastes of the Polar Realms, since their chase has become a favourite pastime with our adventurous gentlemen—"

"Who do *not* 'live at home at ease,'" rejoined Seymour, "but roam over the world in search of deeds of 'derring do,' from the jungles of India to the forests of the Rocky Mountains. Mr. Lamont and his friend, Lord David Kennedy, spent a whole summer in the Arctic seas, and saw but eleven bears, eight of which they killed. Those which survive, however, appear to be of enormous size; one which fell before Mr. Lamont's victorious rifle measured upwards of eight feet in height, and about as much in circumference. He was four and a half feet high at the shoulder, and his entire carcass weighed twelve hundred pounds."

"What a monster!" shouted Douglas, "would he not be a prize to a bear's-grease manufacturer!"

"Talking of bear's-grease," said Mountjoy, "reminds me of a story of Gerstäcker's."

"Oh, come now," retorted Douglas, "I have read most of Gerstäcker's books, and I am sure they do not include a treatise upon pomades and pomatums!"

"No; but Gerstäcker had a dog called *Bearsgrease*, a regular type of fidelity, courage, devotion, and all the canine virtues."

"And now, Mountjoy, it is your turn for a yarn."

"Tell us the story," said the Fat Boy; "that is, if it is worth telling."

"Well, mine shall be about bears, not the white bears of the Polar Seas, but our old friends, the Grisly Bears of the North American forests."]

AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE GRISLY BEAR.

Gerstäcker, the famous German traveller, with a couple of friends, and some Indian hunters, had been seeking bears in the almost impenetrable recesses of the Western forests. In the course of the day they had separated into twos and threes, with the view of spreading over a wider area, and so it happened that Gerstäcker, and a young friend named Erskine, found themselves together, accompanied by half a score of dogs, one of which was the German sportsman's loyal attendant, Bearsgrease.

For a while all their exertions to discover an enemy worthy of their prowess and their rifles proved in vain, and they had begun to despair, when, on a sudden, their hopes were aroused by the loud baying of the dogs, who had swept some distance in advance. When they arrived at the spot, the hunters found an enormous bear contending with the dogs in a passion of fury. Four of them he had already stricken to the earth, when Erskine, disdaining to trust the chances of a long shot, drew his hunting-knife, and rushed in at Bruin, with the intention of terminating the struggle at one blow. The bear, however, maddened by the wounds which the dogs had inflicted, instantly turned upon his new assailant, and gripped him fast in his enormous arms. Gerstäcker rushed to his friend's assistance, and drove his knife twice or thrice into the bear's body, though, in the excitement of the moment, scarcely conscious where he directed his blows; but the ferocious beast, still maintaining his vice-like grasp of Erskine, raised one of his sledge-hammer paws, and felled the German to the earth.

When he recovered his consciousness—some hours afterwards—he found his faithful 'Bearsgrease' licking his face and hands, and whining plaintively over him. Raising him-

self on one arm, he looked around, and pitiful was the spectacle which met his gaze. Within a few feet of him lay his friend's mutilated body, and beside him the dead carcass of the grisly bear, covered with blood which had flowed from a score of wounds. Five of the dogs were also dead.

After some painful efforts, Gerstäcker contrived to stand on his feet, though he felt giddy, benumbed with cold, and suffered intense agony from a dislocated shoulder. He then proceeded to kindle a fire, by tearing off a fragment of his hunting-shirt, rolling some gunpowder into the rag, and setting light to it by a flash from his rifle. Blowing it up to a flame, he heaped upon it a quantity of twigs and dry leaves, and in due time found his toil repaid by a glorious fire. It was now dark. He then examined the body of his dead comrade; it was perfectly rigid, and Gerstäcker found it difficult to pull down his arms and lay them straight; nor could he keep his eyes closed, though he laid small stones on them.

The dogs were very hungry, but as he had not strength sufficient to cut up the bear, he could only rip the belly open, and feed them on the entrails. Bearsgrease laid himself down by Erskine's dead body, looked in his face with a calm, fixed, unwavering stare, and went near the bear no more. In the hope of obtaining assistance, Gerstäcker fired off his rifle twice; but there was no response, the forest appeared one vast and silent sepulchre.

Laying himself down by the side of the fire, with his dogs around him, and his rifle ready loaded in his hand, the intrepid hunter attempted to bury all consciousness of his woes in sleep; but the pain of his wound, and the tumult of his emotions, kept him for some hours awake. At length he lost the remembrance of the present in dreams of the past. He fancied himself at home and in bed; his mother

brought him a comforting potion, and soothed him with her gentle hand; he heard the pleasant voices of the children in the street; he saw the snow lying white and heavy on the high-pitched roofs of the houses; he thought how keen and cold it must be out of doors.

Alas for the agony of awaking, and discovering that it was all a dream!

Close to his side lay the faithful Bearsgrease, nestling his head on his master's breast; the fire was dwindling to its last embers; the wind roared and whistled, and tore down the dying leaves and sapless branches; and the wolves were howling fearfully round the dead, kept at a distance by their dread of the living, but hungering and thirsting after their prey. Gerstäcker arose, and piled more wood upon the fire. Soon it shot up in a steady flame, which served as a signal to guide a friend's approach, and as a defence to scare away the wolves. To promote both ends, the hunter loaded and fired his rifle rapidly, till nearly all his powder was spent. Great was his delight when, towards morning, he heard some shots in return, and still keener his pleasure when the cheery sound of human voices broke upon the forest silence, and in a few moments he was surrounded by a ring of friends. A litter was constructed to carry the sufferer—who was faint and sick with pain, fatigue, and excitement—to the nearest settlement, and his friend's body was interred beneath the shadow of a mighty tree, at such a depth as would protect it from the ravages of wild beasts.

Such are the perils encountered by the hunter who seeks the Grisly Bear in the wild depths of the American forest.

"With your permission," said Seymour, "I will now, in my turn, give you a picture of American hunting-life."*]

* Benedict Révoil, 'Les Chasses,' p. 278, *et sqq.*

CROSSING THE PRAIRIES.

An American gentleman, named Jeffrey, was crossing the prairies for Santa Fè. His convoy consisted of two waggons and twelve attendants. Two of the latter were negro slaves from the Mozambique ; all the others were Canadians, who had not been long in his service, but proved of special utility to their employer. In an unaccountably brief time they had acquired a wonderful knowledge of the country they were about to traverse, and were, therefore, efficient as guides, while in the pursuit of game they showed a remarkable degree of skill and perseverance.

Unfortunately, however, says Mr. Jeffrey—in whose name I shall henceforth speak—like most Indian half-breeds, they were exceedingly pusillanimous, and required a constantly watchful eye to be kept upon their movements. Good marksmen as they were, I could never prevail upon them to confront any animal as formidable as a bison. If you only pronounced the name of the grisly bear they fell into a panic of terror ! I killed two or three bisons, therefore, without receiving any succour from my followers ; except from one, named Narcissus, who was attached to me by ties of gratitude, and who always stood gallantly by me, though his teeth began to chatter, and his eyes to flow like fountains, when we drew near the enemy.

One day, after noon, I unyoked my waggons near a pond where animals of different kinds were accustomed to resort at night to quench their thirst. We could trace their footsteps all along the bank. The spot being well-known to my Canadians, they begged me to encamp at a certain distance, because the grislys were very dangerous in those parts, and if we remained close to the water we should probably lose some of our horses, and perhaps be ourselves attacked. And

it is a curious fact, that when a grisly bear has once tasted human flesh, he seems to prefer it to all other food, and disdains his usual prey if he can but pounce upon a man. I did not wish to endanger the lives either of my men or my horses. After allowing the latter to drink their fill, I marched onward for about two miles, and camped for the night in a little valley, from which it was impossible to catch sight of the lake.

We kindled an immense fire to keep off the wild beasts, and left our horses free to pasture on a few tufts of greensward scattered at intervals among the surrounding rocks. For my own part, however, I eagerly desired an opportunity of putting a bullet into a grisly, for it was three years or more since I had killed one.

As I had not been very fortunate in some varieties of the chase, I feared I might not show any greater aptitude in this kind of sport, which requires firm nerves and long practice. Therefore I sounded four or five of my men, including Narcissus, to know if they would accompany me in pursuit of the grislys, under the protecting shades of night. Only three accepted my proposal. The others I left with the waggons, warning them to replenish and keep alive the fire, and to watch that the horses did not stray too far.

Just as the last rays of the setting sun empurpled the distant horizon, I reached the pond ; and having brought some spades and pickaxes, we began to dig, at about a hundred paces distant, a trench or ditch in the sand, from three to four feet deep. The earth which it supplied we heaped up in a kind of rampart on its margin, for our better concealment ; and after an hour's hard labour, having finished our task, posted ourselves in the trench, and with rifles all loaded, awaited the approach of the enemy.

But our expectation was in vain. A great number of wild

animals came to quench their thirst; only, the king of the bears did not show himself. Cayeutes I saw, and panthers, and other quadrupeds; but I was not disposed to throw away powder and ball upon them, for a musket-shot would infallibly have alarmed the bears, and driven them into the forest. We gained nothing, however, by our prudent tranquillity; and when the morning broke, we emerged from our ambuscade, stiff, awkward, disappointed, and overwhelmed with sleep.

We had not descried the shadow of a grisly, though we had heard them roaring in the distance.

Our waggons and horses had attracted them, for we afterwards learned that they had prowled all night in the neighbourhood of the camp. The men we had left in charge had undergone an agony of terror, but preserved sufficient presence of mind to keep the fire alive. Our steeds were so panic-stricken that they almost dashed into the flames, whose reflected light alone prevented the grislys from attacking them.

I gave up all hopes of securing one as a trophy to my prowess, but was unwilling to return to the waggons without a supply of game to compensate my men and myself for our dreary vigil. We had already crossed the ravine which separated us from the camp, when a herd of deer darted through the thorny bushes by our side; leaping, tearing, and bounding, as if under the influence of an overpowering terror.

Without attempting to ascertain the cause of this pell-mell flight, I fired both my barrels into the hurrying crowd, and brought down one of the largest. My men imitated my example, but without the same success. Scarcely had I removed my rifle from my shoulder before an enormous grisly issued from the brushwood, and advanced towards us; he was not above one hundred paces off at the utmost, so that

we had no time to reload our guns. I confess I was seized with so awful an apprehension, that, for a few seconds, I stood utterly without sense or movement, and all uncertain what to do; but recovering myself with an effort, I soon saw that one means of escape alone remained for us from our horrible position. When the Redskins attack a bear with guns and knives, they are accustomed to seat themselves close together on the approach of their enemy. The animal is of a fierce, aggressive disposition—singles out one of them—and darts upon his prey. The poor wretch is sometimes killed by the first stroke of the bear's paw, but generally escapes with a few severe wounds. Immediately, and all together, his companions precipitate themselves on the horrible animal; some seize him by his fore-paws, and raise him upright, so as to prevent him from wheeling round, while their companions repeatedly stab him with their knives. Often the bear is killed, and not one of his assailants injured. But occasionally he proves the conqueror: he tears in pieces two or three of his antagonists, and the others save themselves.

It appeared to me possible to adopt the same method: by seating ourselves, and presenting a firm front to the ferocious beast, we might perhaps intimidate him, and prevent him from attacking us before I had reloaded my rifle.

'Seat yourselves! seat yourselves!' I cried with all my might, while I knelt on the ground, and prepared to reload in case I should have the time or opportunity. But casting a rapid glance around, I discovered that my men had all taken to flight the moment they had perceived the grisly, and had already climbed half-way up the hill which separated us from the camp. Narcissus had accompanied them, in the belief, as he told me afterwards, that I should also run; but I could not follow them without losing ground,

for I was far less nimble of foot. As he was afraid to turn his head and look behind him, poor Narcissus only found out his mistake when he reached the camp.

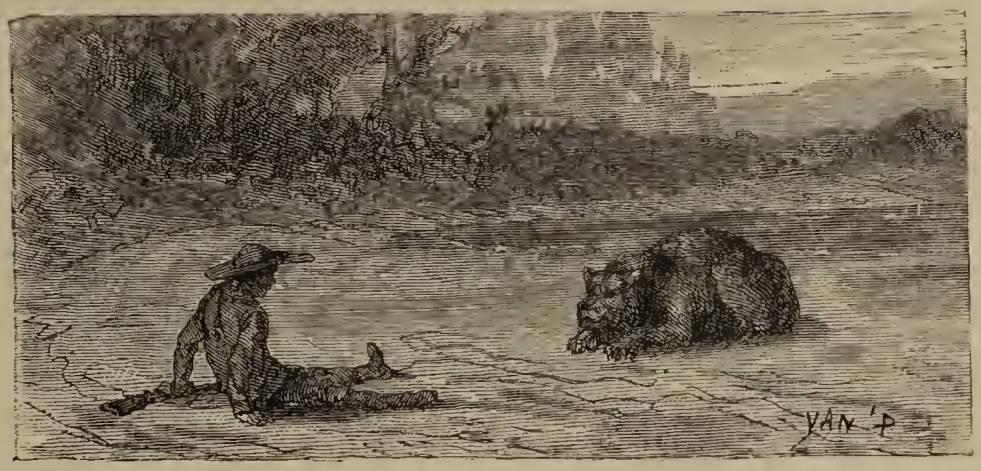
Thus, then, I remained alone to confront the grisly. It was not worth while to retreat: if I had fled with my men, the beast would have caught one of us, and the chances are I should have been his victim before I had accomplished thirty yards. Not only was my rifle unloaded, but, unfortunately, while digging the trench, I had given Narcissus my hunting-knife to carry, because it pained me. I was, therefore, entirely disarmed, and necessarily concluded that it was all over with me.

'O Heaven,' I exclaimed, 'have mercy on my dear wife and poor little children!'

And, trembling with an anxiety you will easily understand, I waited until the bear should spring upon me.

But he seemed by no means in a hurry. He advanced with a heavy step, gradually slackening his march; then, when he was about twelve feet distant, he halted, and crouched down upon the ground like a cat, while he eyed me steadfastly. I seated myself in my turn, and gazed at him in the same manner with all the composure I could command.

During my studentship at Boston College, I had read that animals are unable to bear the fixed unwavering look of a man; and although my experience had never put this opinion to the test, I now resolved to venture on the experiment. Unfortunately, it produced but little effect. From time to time the grisly closed his eyes, or looked to the right or left; but that was all. At length he lay down, with his paws folded under him, and his chin resting on the ground; for all the world like a cat watching a mouse. Occasionally he licked his lips: he had, undoubtedly, just finished a repast, and I now divined his intention. Having eaten of fresh



UNDER GUARD.

meat, he was not hungry, but had resolved to watch me until the moment his appetite returned; and as the bears are very partial to human flesh, the humorous fellow quietly waited the conclusion of his digestive operations before rending me to pieces.

["Not a very agreeable position!" cried Douglas.

"No, indeed," said Vernon; "but do not you remember to have read of a North American Indian who was kept prisoner for a whole day by a grisly, until, in the evening, spent with anxiety and fatigue, he fell asleep? When he woke up, some hours afterwards, the grisly had disappeared."

"A lucky escape for the Redskin!" said Lambert.

"Well, the truth is," remarked Fisher, "that the grisly bear, by organization and habit, is an animal of great ferocity; but if, when he encounters a victim, he is not hungry, he often passes by without taking any notice of it. Sometimes he kills out of lust of blood and greed of carnage; but not unfrequently he goes on his way, idle and indifferent."

"The American Indians," observed Douglas, "would have us believe that the bear often waits until the man is asleep, and then, on detecting his very first movement when he wakes, pounces upon him. It is my opinion, however, that

the bear who kept watch over the slumbering Redskin was driven away by some noise, or unexpected object, during his prisoner's sleep."

"And such is my opinion also," said Seymour. "But to continue my story:"]

I sat still in silent but agonized expectation that the fierce beast waited only for the moment when I should sink with fatigue, to dart headlong upon me, on my making the slightest movement.

I had spent the night, as you know, without food; I now began to feel a keen hunger, and a strong desire to sleep. Happily, I had carried with me a flask full of water; and this I had emptied in the morning, so that I was not thirsty. Otherwise, I could not possibly have endured the fatigues and emotions of the day.

The sun rose with unclouded splendour, and its warm rays soon heated the sand around me, so that between the twofold heat I could feel my skin literally burning. I wore a broad-brimmed felt hat, which sheltered my head from the sun's direct beams; and yet never had I found the sun so oppressive as on this occasion; perhaps, because I had neither ate nor slept. I still retained all my presence of mind, and eagerly watched for an opportunity to elude my suspicious guardian. My people might have summoned courage, and hastened in a body to my rescue. But, alas! I knew too well their utter cowardice; I knew they would not dare to approach within a quarter of a mile; and, in that case, it was probable the grisly, on seeing their arrival, would rush upon me, and put an end to my uncertainty.

I attempted to load my gun, but at the very first movement the brute raised his head, and began to growl, as if he would say to me, 'None of that, my friend, or, if you stir—.' I saw that if I persisted he would fling himself upon me

before I had even measured out the charge of powder. He was an enormous bear, the largest I had ever seen, enriched with a long gray mane, and having very piercing though small eyes. You would scarcely believe how remarkably astute are these old bears. My guardian clearly understood that my gun was a weapon of some kind: he also understood, I am certain, that my people were in the neighbourhood, for he cast an unquiet glance from time to time in the direction of the waggons. I then felt my heart throbbing violently against my breast, and a cold sweat spread over all my body.

For, instead of remaining immovable, the old grisly was in a state of perpetual agitation which greatly increased my anxiety. A herd of young deer passed near us, but on catching sight of the bear, executed a precipitate 'wheel-about,' and darted off, as if stung with a sudden frenzy, in a different direction. The grisly raised himself on his paws, half turned, and eagerly contemplated the fugitives. All his species are passionately fond of venison; I hoped, therefore, that my own particular friend would abandon his watch, and hasten after them. But he undoubtedly thought 'a bird in the hand worth two in the bush;' for he once more faced me, couched himself anew, growling horribly, and eying me more greedily than ever; as if to say, 'You see, my good fellow, that I have given you the preference over a fine young deer; so I have no intention to let you give me the slip.' I can afford to laugh at the situation *now*, but, believe me, it was no laughing matter *then*.

I soon experienced a new alarm from another direction. I had noticed the attentive gaze of the bear towards the spot where my waggons were planted. Now he rose upon his hind-paws, and roared with rage, turning back his lips and showing his teeth, as if he perceived some disagreeable object.

I afterwards learned that my men, encouraged by Narcissus, had armed themselves, like Hamlet's father, from top to toe, and moved forward to the summit of the hill. From this point they were able to catch sight of the bear engaged in his occupation of watching my humble self: accordingly, the moment he rose on his paws and turned towards them, they took to their heels and fled towards the waggons, in which they ensconced themselves, half crazed with fright. After a few seconds, the bear again crouched down opposite to me, stretched out his paws, yawned, shut his eyes, and appeared weary of mounting guard. However, it was evident that he had resolved to remain there until night; otherwise, he might have instantly torn me in pieces.

Towards evening I heard a distant growling, which seemed to vex and disturb my guardian. By the peculiar sound of the voice I was able to recognize it as that of a she-bear, who I thought was in quest of her companion. The latter arose—sat down again and again on the ground—wandered first in this direction, and then in that, with a ferocious air, scratching the earth as if he were undecided and in trouble; but he remained silent, and gradually the cry of the female grew fainter. This was the critical moment, when my anxiety reached its height; for if the grisly had replied to his companion, and had called her to the spot, there can be no doubt that, as she was probably hungry, she would have thrown herself without a moment's hesitation on the dainty supper her mate had reserved until then. According to all appearances, such was the opinion of the old rascal, so that he judged it prudent to keep quiet.

Night at length arrived. The stars sparkled, but no moon shone in the blue heaven. I could distinguish objects very vaguely, even at a short distance, and in the east could but just make out the dim configuration of the hills. The grisly,

still immovable, formed a kind of confused mass within a few paces of my position. I ascertained that he was not asleep, but closely watched my every movement.

At intervals, his eyes, turned towards me, glowed like burning coals. I had but one hope of safety : by remaining motionless and silent, I hoped to weary him out, or at all events to prevent him from throwing himself upon me, while waiting for some fortuitous cause or accident to draw him elsewhere. But that I might not lose this last chance, I was compelled to keep awake, and this I found a difficult task. I was spent with fatigue, I was overcome with a longing for repose. I had had no sleep for thirty-six hours, and it was twenty-four since I had broken my fast ; moreover, I was wearied by the alarm, anxiety, and apprehension which I had experienced. The air was fresh, and this delightful coolness, after a burning hot day, seemed to lull me to slumber. A profound silence reigned over the scene, and I had need of continual efforts to keep my eyelids open.

From time to time I felt my head sink forward ; immediately I drew myself upright, with a shudder of terror at the idea that the bear was perhaps preparing to make his fatal leap. It was something horrible ! Even now I frequently dream of the agonies of that night. I was like one condemned to death, who, pursued relentlessly by a frightful nightmare, awakes with a start to remember that he must die on the morrow ! I do not think it would have been possible to support much longer this frightful constraint ; it would have been beyond the strength of human nature.

When the night was two or three hours old, and its deep shadows had overspread both earth and sky, I heard different animals coming to the watering-place. Some passed at a short distance from me, but I could not distinguish what they were. The grisly could distinguish them clearly, but

he contented himself with turning round his head when they came near him. I soon gave up all expectation of his forsaking his post to pounce upon one of them. Suddenly he raised his head, looked at me, and began to roar. 'The moment is come!' I thought to myself. He reared himself on his paws, and roared more loudly, eying me with a fixed glance—at least it appeared so to my alarmed senses. I prepared myself for the struggle, holding my gun in my left hand, and my handkerchief in my right, with the intention of driving the butt-end of the rifle right into his throat, and of choking him, if possible, by thrusting my handkerchief to the very bottom of his windpipe.

This achievement I did not pretend to look upon as very easy or practicable, but it was my last chance, and I was determined not to perish without a final effort.

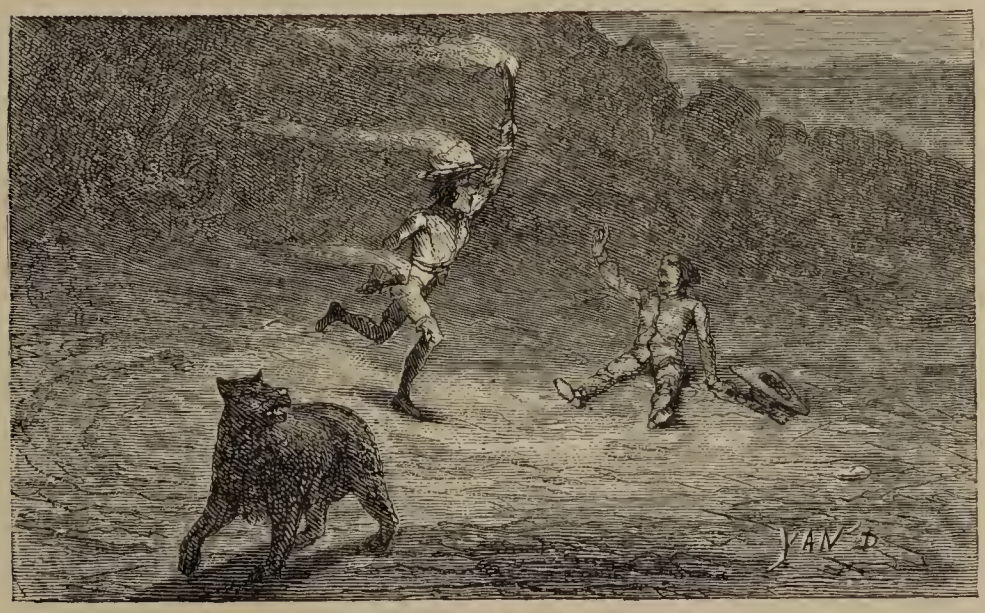
In truth, I had given up all hope; my only desire was to close with the monster who had persecuted me for so many hours, and to inflict upon him all the injury I could.

The alarm, however, proved in vain. After a few minutes, the ferocious animal once more became tranquil, and again threw himself on the ground, not lying down as before, but stretching his head towards me, like a cat who attentively examines any particular object. At length, when he had apparently resolved some doubts which troubled himself, he stretched himself full length upon the grass.

At the end of another ten or fifteen minutes he made another start, and roared more fiercely than ever. The idea then occurred to me that another animal of his genus was cautiously approaching me in the rear, and that my sentinel was not inclined to permit any division of the spoil. If I were in the right, it was clear my fate would soon be decided. I also conjectured that my men were making some attempt to rescue me under cover of the darkness; yet, was

it probable they would have courage enough to dare anything? As you may suppose, I had no longer the slightest inclination to sleep.

The grisly, standing erect, growled incessantly, and stalked to and fro, as if uncertain what step he should next decide upon. Finally he came to a resolve, and I saw that he was getting ready for a spring. The hour had come!



A CLEVER RUSE.

At this very juncture, an unexpected howling echoed in my rear, and a bright light illuminated all the surrounding objects. The noise lasted a minute or two, and an individual, whose head and shoulders seemed all on fire, dashed into the space between me and the grisly. The animal uttered a terrible roar, more of terror than rage, and with a succession of rapid bounds disappeared in the darkness. Then, in the person who had come on the scene so opportunely, I recognized Narcissus. The flame which had at first encircled him no longer waved and glittered, but he held in each hand two or three burning branches, which he waved around his head, leaping, and crying, and whirling round and round in a

frantic manner : he had all the appearance of a demon, though he was for me a liberating angel. The poor fellow experienced so great a fright that he could scarcely speak, and heard not a word that I addressed to him.

'Master,' he cried, 'quick, load your gun !—load your gun !—the great beast will return !—load, load your gun !'

The advice was good, and I followed it as quickly as I was able. On first rising from my recumbent position, I found all my limbs so stiff that I felt like one paralyzed. But the blood soon began to circulate anew, and when I had loaded my double barrel we proceeded with all speed towards the waggons. Narcissus ran in front of me, still shaking with alarm, carrying on his head a frying-pan and a torch in his right hand, leaping and shouting like a madman, as if to drive afar every beast of prey.

At length we reached our encampment. When I had appeased my appetite, I inquired of my deliverer what had transpired in my absence, and how he had contrived to deliver me from my perilous position. It appeared that the poor fellow had endeavoured throughout the entire day to persuade my men to make an effort for my release. As I have said, they had screwed up their courage in the morning so far as to reach the summit of the hill, and then it had again evaporated. In the evening, Narcissus resolved on coming to my help alone, and for this purpose hit upon a very ingenious stratagem. He took one of my large frying-pans, and filled it with a layer of gunpowder moistened so as to burn slowly ; over this he placed some straw, and in the middle of the straw poured a little dry powder, crowning the whole with a small pile of sticks, twigs, and broken branches. With the frying-pan on his head, he set out on his enterprise after night had gathered in. As soon as he

had cleared about half the space between me and the camp, he changed his posture, and creeping slowly and cautiously along the ground, arrived within a hundred paces of my position without the grisly suspecting his approach.

It was at this moment the ferocious creature had reared himself for the first time on his hind-paws, and began to roar. 'That terrible voice,' said Narcissus, 'froze my very heart, and I nearly swooned!'

Remaining motionless until the grisly had again subsided into tranquillity, my mulatto recommenced his crawling progress through the thick grass, advancing an inch or two at a time, and pausing for a moment when he had accomplished a few paces.

At last, when he thought himself sufficiently near, he drew a match from his pocket, and struck it. He had but to touch the straw, and immediately it was on fire! It was during these preparations the bear had shown himself the most incensed. But Narcissus gave him no time to act. Springing forward, with the frying-pan on his head and some burning boughs in his hand, he put his adversary to the rout by his first charge. It may be said of him, in Cæsar's boasting language, 'He came—he saw—he conquered!'

["A capital story!" remarked Vernon; "what wonderful presence of mind your hero displayed, Seymour. To sit calmly in front of a raging bear, hour after hour, needs no ordinary nerves. Now, in my opinion, there was more true courage in such an act than in springing into the midst of a hot fight, with blood all on fire, and laying about with your sword, as if you were a dozen Murats in one!"

"I am sorry," said Douglas, "old Grisly was not punished for his cruel conduct."

"I should have finished my story properly," said Seymour, "and you would have found he did not escape. Mr. Jeffrey

determined to rid the world of such a dangerous monster, and feeling certain he would not stray far from the spring so long as the horses remained in its vicinity, he made an expedition with a couple of friends and their dogs a day or two afterwards, in search of the venerable grisly. After a two days' hunt they discovered his retreat, and a well-aimed bullet terminated his career. My hero purchased his skin of the man who shot him, for a hundred dollars, that he might always preserve it as a memorial of the terrible hours he had passed face to face with one of the most dangerous of the wild animals which infest the North American wildernesses."

[You may be sure, most gentle reader, that Seymour's companions did not fail to applaud his recital.

"And now," said Fisher, "I have some curious particulars to relate in reference to the once popular sport of bear-baiting."]

BEAR-BAITING.

I have already spoken of the bear-combats which the Earl of Leicester presented before Queen Elizabeth on the occasion of her famous visit to Kenilworth Castle, but a more detailed account may be acceptable. They took place on the sixth day of her sojourn (Friday, July 14, 1575), between thirteen bears and a number of small-sized mastiffs, then called ban-dogs. 'The bears,' says Master Robert Laneham,* 'were brought forth into the court, the dogs set to them, to argue the points even face to face. They had learned counsel also o' both sides; very fierce both t'one and t'other, and eager in argument; if the dog, in pleading, would pluck the bear by the throat, the bear, with traverse,

* Laneham—Account of the Queen's Entertainment, etc., in Nichols's 'Progress of Queen Elizabeth,' 1st vol.

would claw him again by the scalp; confess, an he list, but avoid he could not, that was bound to the bar [the bears were all tied up]; and his counsel told him that it could be to him no policy in pleading. Therefore, thus with fending and fearing, with plucking and tugging, scratching and biting, by plain tooth and nail to one side and t'other, such expense of blood and leather was there between them, as a month's licking, I mean, will not recover; and yet they remain as far out as ever they were. It was a sport very pleasant, of these beasts, to see the bear with his pink eyes luring after his enemy's approach, the nimbleness and weight of the dog to take his advantage, and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid the assaults; if he were bitten in one place, how he would pinch in another to get free; if he were taken once, then what shift, with biting, with clawing, with roaring, tossing, and tumbling, he would work to wind himself from them; and when he was loose, to shake his ears twice or thrice, with the blood and the slaver about his phisnomy, was a matter of goodly relief.'

Such was the spirit in which our gentle ancestors regarded this most cruel sport, which in the twelfth century was a great favourite with all classes of Londoners. The learned Erasmus, who visited the metropolis in the reign of Henry VIII., speaks of 'many herds of bears' regularly trained for baiting; the more opulent nobles had their 'bear-wards,' or keepers, while the king himself, among his officers, included the 'master of the royal bears.' The Paris Garden Theatre, at Bankside, was especially devoted to this popular pastime, the public being admitted on payment of a penny at the gate, and a penny for a standing-place.* At one time, however, the charge of admission was only a half-

* Peter Cunningham, 'London, Past and Present.' See also a curious medley of antiquarian and historical information, entitled *Londiniana*.

penny, as appears from a passage in the writings of a poet named Crowley, who flourished under Henry VIII.—

'At Paris Garden, each Sunday, a man shall not fail
To find two or three hundred for the bearwards vale.
One halfpenny a piece they used for to give,
When some have no more in their purses, I believe,
Wel, at the last day their conscience wil declare,
That the poor ought to have al that they spare.
If you therefore give to see a bear fight,
Be sure God his curse wil on you light.'

Some of the bears, from their superior strength and courage, I suppose, became popular heroes, and were celebrated in verse. Thus, one Sir John Davy censures the young students of the law for

'Leaving old Plowden, Dyer, and Brooke alone,
To see old Harry Shinks and Sackerson.'

The bear Sackerson has been immortalized by Shakspeare in the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' where Slender declares to sweet Anne Page, 'I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain: but, I warrant you, the women have so cried and shrieked at it, that it passed.'

James I. prohibited bear-baiting on Sundays, but was no enemy to the pastime, for he granted the lessees of the Bear Garden his royal patent 'for the sole practising and profit of the fighting and combating of wild and domestic beasts in England for fourteen years.' Edward Alleyn, the actor, and the founder of Dulwich College, held the patent for several years, and annually cleared by it a profit of £500.

The Bear Garden continued a popular resort until the reign of Charles I., but the Commonwealth gave orders that the bear should be killed, and the sport discontinued. In the merry times of the merry monarch—that is, in the dis-

solute days of a saturnine king—bear-baiting was revived, and foreign ambassadors were frequently entertained with it. At a later period, the bear was replaced by the bull; but Bruin occasionally figured in these cruel sports even in the days of Addison, who refers to it in his *Spectator*, and of Gay, who celebrates both bear and bull in the *Trivia* :—

> 'Experienced men, inured to city ways,
> Need not the calendar to count their days
> When through the town, with slow and solemn air,
> Led by the nostril walks the muzzled bear;
> Behind him moves, majestically dull,
> The pride of Hockley Hole, the surly bull.
> Learn hence the periods of the week to name—
> Mondays and Thursdays are the days of game.'

It was not until 1835 that this debasing and brutal amusement was finally abolished by Act of Parliament, which forbade the keeping of any house, pit, or other place for baiting or fighting any bull, bear, dog, or other animal. Who would regret the disappearance of such a relic of 'the olden time?'

["I suppose you have heard enough of bears by this time," continued Fisher, "or I would relate a few anecdotes from one of Dr. Scoresby's books." *

"Who *was* Dr. Scoresby?" inquired Vernon.

"A brave man and a good man," replied Fisher; "who in early life no less distinguished himself as a successful whaling captain than as an acute scientific observer. Having acquired a competency, he withdrew from his profession; and, impelled by a strong religious feeling, resolved to enter the Church. His career as a minister of God's word was eminently successful and laborious. He wrote several valuable works, and contributed some important facts to scientific research."

* Dr. W. Scoresby, 'An Account of the Arctic Regions,' &c.

"I should like to hear what he has to say about bears," exclaimed Mountjoy, "for all his tales will be true—which is more, I think, than can be said of all the stories told by naturalists."

"Go on, Fisher," cried the others, "go on—that's a good fellow."

"*Consensu omnium*," said Seymour; "fire away."

The young naturalist, therefore, turned once more to the inexhaustible pages of his manuscript volume.]

A GROUP OF ANECDOTES.

I have already spoken of the remarkable attachment borne by the Polar bears to their young. Dr. Scoresby relates an illustrative anecdote, on the authority of a credible and well-informed person, who accompanied him in several whaling voyages in the capacity of surgeon.

A mother bear, with two cubs under its protection, was pursued across a field of ice by a party of armed sailors. At first she seemed to urge the young ones to increase their speed, by running before them, turning round, and manifesting, by a peculiar action and voice, her anxiety for their progress; but finding that her pursuers gained upon them, she carried, or pushed, or pitched them alternately forward, until she effected their escape. In throwing them before her, the little creatures placed themselves, it is said, before her path, to receive the impulse; and when projected some yards in advance, they ran onwards until she overtook them, when they alternately adjusted themselves for a second throw.

["I begin to respect Mrs. Ursus—or Ursa—Major," said Douglas; "she seems to be a capital mother. And how about Ursus Major himself? Is he as sagacious as his spouse?"

"You shall judge," replied Fisher, "from the following anecdote."]

A whaling captain being anxious to procure a bear without wounding the skin, made trial of the stratagem of laying the noose of a rope in the snow, and placing within it a piece of kreng.

["What is kreng?" said Mountjoy.]

Roasted whale's-flesh, (replied Fisher.) A bear, ranging the neighbouring ice, was soon drawn to the spot by the smell of burning meat. He perceived the bait, approached, and seized it in his mouth; but his foot, at the same moment, being entangled in the noose by a quick jerk of the rope, he pushed it off with his paw, and deliberately retired.

After having eaten and digested the piece he had carried away with him, he returned. The noose, with another lump of kreng, being then replaced, he again pushed aside the rope, and walked off like a conqueror with his booty. A third time the noose was laid, but, excited to caution by the evident observation of the bear, the sailors concealed the rope beneath the snow, and laid the bait in a deep hole dug in the centre. Once more the bear approached, and this time the seamen felt assured of their success. But Bruin, more sagacious than they had supposed, snuffed about the place for a few moments, scraped away the snow with his paw, flung aside the rope, and again escaped unhurt with his prize.

["Well," exclaimed Douglas, "I had no idea bears were so very clever. I had always looked upon Bruin as a slow, stupid, and heavy sort of fellow, though terribly ferocious, and partial to hugging his victims to death. It is something to find him not so black as he's painted."]

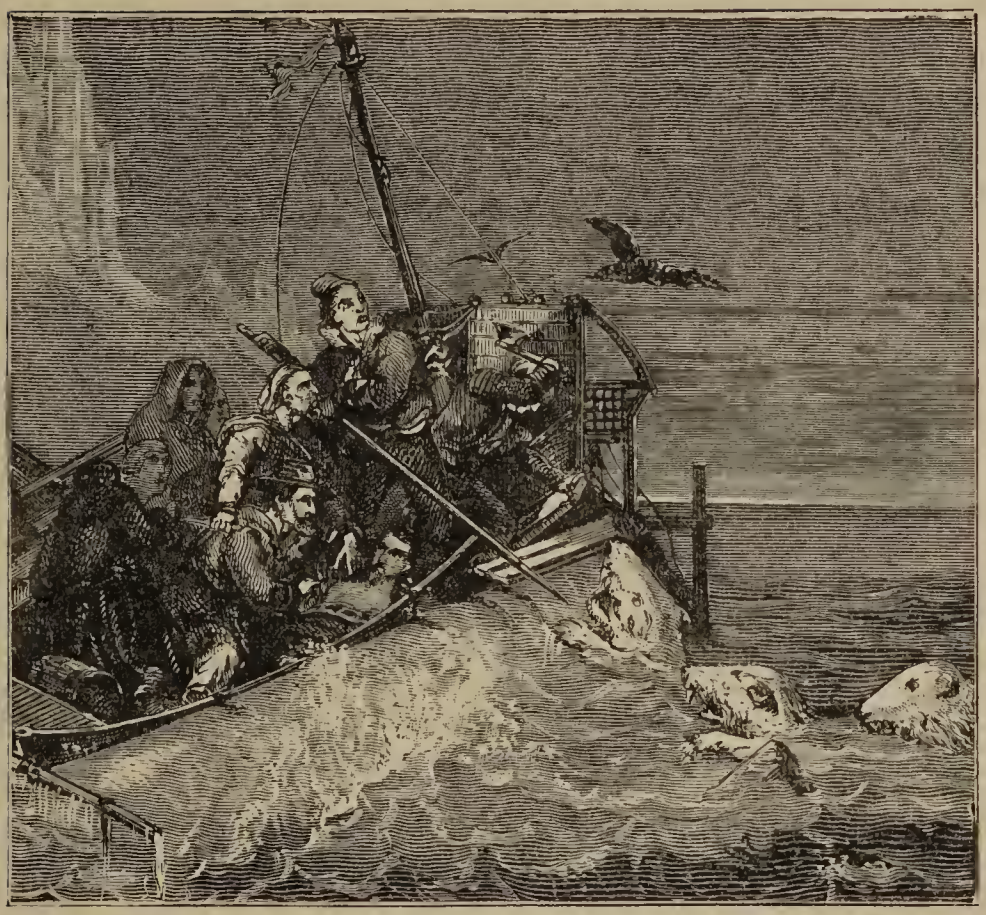
Yes; Captain—or Dr.—which shall we call him?—Scoresby records several instances of his ferocity.

One Captain Cook, a mariner from Lynn, being off the coast of Spitzbergen, went ashore, accompanied by his surgeon and mate. While roaming about, a bear suddenly rushed upon the captain, and in an instant seized him between its paws. At this awful juncture, when a second's delay would have been fatal, he called to his surgeon to fire; who, with extraordinary promptitude and resolution, did as he was directed, and providentially shot the bear through the head. By this ready assistance the captain was saved from being torn in pieces.

The commander of another whaling ship met with a similar accident. Captain Hawkins—for such was his name—when in Davis Strait, observing a very large bear, manned a boat and pushed off in pursuit of it. On reaching it—the bear was seated on a floating island of ice—the captain struck it twice in the breast with a lance; but while in the act of recovering his weapon for another blow, the infuriated animal sprang up, seized him by the thigh, and flung him over its head into the water. Fortunately it did not continue the attack, but exerted itself to escape; and as every one's attention was directed to the captain's rescue, it effected his purpose without further molestation.

On one occasion a bear, which was attacked by a boat's crew in the Spitzbergen Sea, made such a formidable resistance that it succeeded in climbing up the side of the boat and taking possession of it; while the dismayed sailors fled for safety to the water, supporting themselves by the gunwale and rings of their skiff, until the arrival of some of their comrades, who shot the bear as it crouched inoffensively in the stern.

A narrow escape is also related by Dr. Scoresby. A seaman, who was pursued on an ice-field by a bear, and at a considerable distance from succour, preserved his life by



AN EXCITING ADVENTURE.

throwing down some article of clothing whenever the animal gained upon him, as it then immediately suspended the pursuit to examine the decoy, and thus gave him time to obtain some advance. In this way, by means of a hat, a jacket, and a neck-handkerchief successively abandoned, the bear's progress was retarded, and the sailor accomplished in safety his retreat to his own vessel.

Two mariners belonging to a vessel which had anchored near Nova Zembla, landed on an island at the mouth of the Waigatz, and, impelled by curiosity, wandered some distance from the beach. All unconscious of danger, they were eagerly surveying the novel scene, when one of them was suddenly seized from behind by a bear and dragged to the

earth. His companion ran off and gave the alarm, and a party of his shipmates came to their assistance. During their approach the bear stood over his prey without manifesting the slightest alarm; and, on their attack, sprang upon one of his assailants, who fell a victim to his strength and ferocity. The remainder fled in confusion, and could not be persuaded to renew the conflict. Three sailors only among the crew possessed sufficient courage to combat so formidable an animal; they attacked, after a desperate struggle killed it, and recovered the mangled bodies of their unfortunate comrades.

The bear, however, may be captured in the water without much difficulty; but on the ice an encounter is hazardous, from the power of resistance that he has at his command. When perceived, he always turns upon his enemies. If struck with a lance, he is apt to seize it in his mouth, and either snap it in twain, or wrest it out of his antagonist's grasp. If shot with a ball, unless struck in the head, heart, or shoulder, it enrages rather than depresses him, and he falls with increased fury upon his pursuers. When shot from a distance, and unable to escape, he has been observed to retire to the shelter of a hummock of ice, and, as if conscious of the styptical effect of cold, apply snow with his paws to the wound.

The size of this animal is generally four or five feet in height, seven or eight in length, and nearly as much in circumference. Sometimes, however, it is found much larger. Barentz, the old navigator, relates that in the year 1596 he killed two bears in Cherie Island, the skin of one of which measured twelve, and the other thirteen feet. Its weight is generally from 600 lbs. to above half a ton. Long whitish-yellow hair covers its whole body, particularly about the inside of the legs. Its paws are seven inches or more in

breadth; its claws two inches long. Its canine teeth, exclusive of the portion imbedded in the jaw, are about an inch and a half long And it is gifted with a jaw of such wonderful strength, that it has been known to snap a lance in twain, though made of iron, and half an inch in diameter.

Two more quotations from other sources, (continued Fisher,) and I shall have exhausted my stores of information about the bear.

Barentz, whom I have already mentioned, records what was probably the first encounter between man and the Polar bear; which at that time, ignorant of the deadly nature of the weapons fabricated by human ingenuity, did not fly from an attack made by thirty sailors.

'The purser,' he says, 'slipping somewhat further forward, and seeing the bear to be within the length of a shot, presently levelled his piece, and, discharging it at the bear, shot her into the head, between both the eyes; and yet she held the man still fast by the neck, and lifted up her head with the man in her mouth, but she began somewhat to stagger; wherewith the purser and a Scottishman drew out their courtlaxes, and stroke at her so hard, that their courtlaxes burst, and yet she would not leave the man. At last William Geysen went to them, and with all his might struck the bear upon the snout with his piece, at which time the bear fell to the ground, making a great noise, and William Geysen, leaping upon her, cut her throat. The 7th of September we buried the dead bodies of our men in the States Island, and having flayed the bear, carried her skin to Amsterdam.'

My last anecdote describes a trial of finesse between a bear and a walrus, and is borrowed from Captain Beechey:—*

* Captain F. Beechey, 'Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific.'

'One sunshiny day a walrus, of nine or ten feet in length, rose in a pool of water not very far from us; and, after looking around, drew his greasy carcass upon the ice, where he rolled about for a time, and at length laid himself down to sleep. A bear, which had probably been observing his movements, crawled carefully upon the ice on the opposite side of the pool, and began to roll about also; but apparently with more design than amusement, as he progressively lessened the distance between him and his prey. The walrus, suspicious of his advances, drew himself up, as if preparing to retreat into the water, on which the bear was instantly motionless, as if asleep; but, after a time, begun to lick his paws and clean himself, slowly advancing at the same time nearer his intended prey. His artifice did not succeed; the wary walrus was far too cunning to let himself be entrapped, and suddenly plunged into the pool, which the bear no sooner observed, than he threw off all disguise, rushed to the spot, and followed him in an instant into the water, but too late. The walrus got off, and for that day the bear lost his dinner.'

["Now," cried the Fat Boy, "I think it must be my turn to tell you a story."

"What, you, young Oleaginous!" exclaimed Seymour; "and will it be all your own thunder?"

"I don't know anything about thunder," rejoined the Fat Boy, amid the laughter of his companions; "my story is about a bear, and a bear in India. Of course it's not my own—I read it, somewhere or other, a long time ago—and this is it."]

THE FAT BOY'S STORY.

A British officer and his attendants—coolies, don't you call them?—were travelling in Oude, when, upon getting

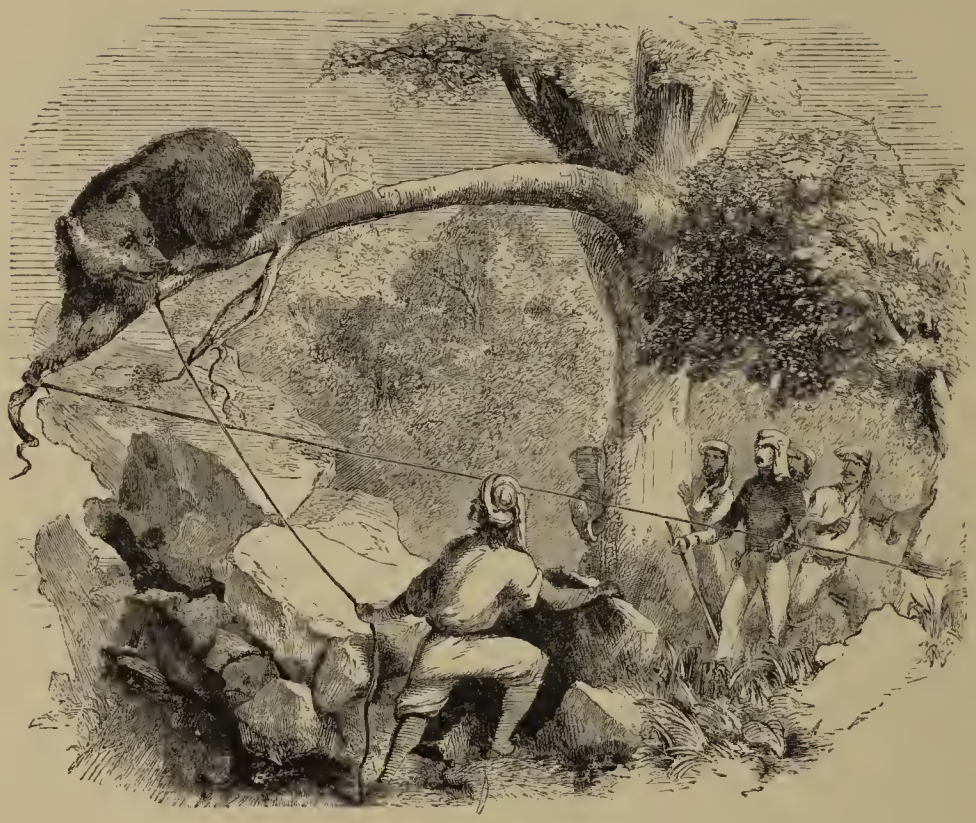
to the summit of a hill which overhung a precipice—what do you think?—why, a *bear* started out from an adjacent wood, and made towards them in no very friendly manner. Well, the officer, full of pluck, was about to fire, when one of the guides requested him to put down his gun, as he would tackle the bear unarmed. Now, just on the very brink of the precipice stood a tall tree, with very tough elastic branches, which shot up from the trunk almost as straight as spears. The guide made for the bear, and as soon as he had attracted his attention, nimbly climbed the tree, just as nimbly followed by the raging beast. Having reached the upper boughs, the Hindu slung a stout cord over the top of the limb on which he stood, letting the other end drop to the ground. This was instantly seized by another coolie, who pulled with all his might and main—as Seymour does when he's out rowing in the washerwoman's tub—ha, ha!

["Very good, young man," retorted Seymour; "or as *you* do, when pulling at the apple-tree, to gather the Doctor's apples!"]

Well, the Hindu fellow pulled away at the rope until the branch projected from the stem just like this—

["Horizontally, you mean," said Douglas.]

That's it—until the branch projected almost horizontally. This being done, the mountaineer crept cautiously as near the extremity as he safely could, followed just as cautiously by the bear; but the moment he saw old Bruin on the bent bough, he cleverly let himself down by the rope to the ground. When the bear found his victim had given him the slip, he endeavoured to retrace his steps; but no sooner had it let go its hold of the bough for this purpose, than the hill-man suddenly cut the cord, which had been securely fastened to a tree, and the depressed branch instantly gained its original



A TRAP FOR BRUIN.

position with an irresistible *rush.* The suddenness of the rebound shook Bruin from his hold, so that he was flung, like the fragment of a rock, into the air—to topple down the precipice, with a horrid howl, and be dashed to atoms! ?

["That's my story," said the Fat Boy complacently.

"Bravo, old fellow! why, you are as good a story-teller as Sir Walter Scott," said Seymour; "here's an orange for you —a Reward of Merit for a Deserving Youth."

Lambert accepted the orange and the compliment with placid composure, and coiled himself up contentedly in his favourite corner.

"How we roam about," said Beauchamp, "from the prairie to the forest, from the Bear Garden of ancient London to the rank jungle of India! It is not so difficult for a person to be in two places at once, after all; for we are

mentally wandering over the hot African plains, while, physically, shut up in a railway-carriage on a Yorkshire line."

"Of all the bears," quoth Douglas, "I think the Polar—*Thalassarctos*, do you not call him?—is the most interesting. I like his courage, his affection for his young, and his sagacity. He does not seem to be vindictively cruel, like the tiger, or so ferocious as the wolf."

"No," said Vernon; "he is not without his good qualities, and I wonder why the epithet *bearish* should be applied to a rude, unmannerly fellow; for I do not see that the king of beasts himself shows a whit more polish. He is rather a hungry fellow though; is he not, Fisher?"

"Oh, yes," cried Douglas, "I grant you he is not very dainty. But I suppose there is no great variety of diet to be enjoyed in the Polar Regions, and that he would soon starve if he were very fastidious."

"The voracity of the bear is almost incredible," said Fisher. "Captain M'Clure, the distinguished Arctic voyager, killed a Polar bear whose stomach contained raisins that had not been long swallowed; a few small pieces of tobacco-leaf; bits of pork fat cut into cubes, which the ship's cook declared must have been used for making mock-turtle soup, an article often found on board a ship in a preserved form; and, lastly, fragments of *sticking-plaster*. It was evident that Bruin had not been troubled with a fastidious appetite. A preserved meat-tin was afterwards found which had supplied him with a portion of his strange meal." *

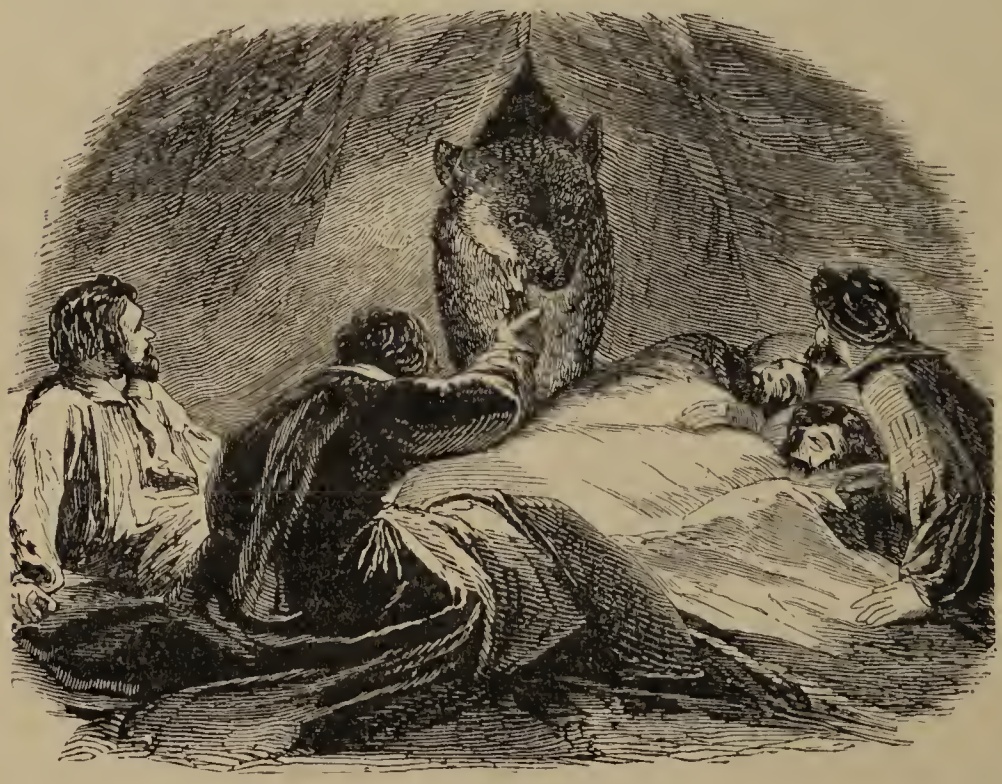
"What a curious medley," said Douglas; "raisins, tobacco, and sticking-plaster! Why, Lambert, even you would certainly have objected to the last two articles, eh, old fellow?"

* Sherard Osborne, 'Discovery of the North-West Passage by Captain Sir Roderick M'Clure.'

Lambert vouchsafed no reply to so impertinent a query, but solaced his wounded spirit with another ham-sandwich.]

THE POLAR BEAR'S VORACITY.

Another instance of Bruin's extraordinary appetite, (continued Fisher,) may amuse you. You will have heard of Dr. Kane, the intrepid American, who, for one-and-twenty months, and in the face of appalling difficulties, pursued the search for Sir John Franklin and his followers. Compelled to winter in the Arctic Regions, Dr. Kane's party was exposed to severe hardships. At one time, when



AN UNLOOKED-FOR INTRUSION.

sleeping in their tent, after a day's laborious exertion, one of them was aroused by a mysterious noise which evidently proceeded from some external cause, and just above his head. Looking up cautiously, he could see that a beast of some kind was engaged in a leisurely survey of the tent and

its inmates. He uttered a cry which aroused his companions; but it was no consolation to them, when thoroughly awakened, to remember that their guns had been left outside, and that not a weapon—not even a walking pole—did the tent contain. What was to be done? A huge bear had coolly thrust in his head at the opening of the tent; and though they lighted lucifer matches, and waved blazing newspapers in his face, refused to be discomfited. Finding a piece of seal's flesh close at hand, he regaled himself upon the dainty, and one Tom Hickey took advantage of his pre-occupation to cut his way with a knife through the other side of the tent, and procure a boat-hook. Thus armed, he dealt a shower of blows on the bear's head, which drove him back, and seizing one of the rifles, a well-aimed shot soon relieved them of their unwelcome visitor.*

But this was not the anecdote I had intended to relate. When an exploring party went out for a long journey, a supply of provisions was previously stored for their use at a convenient point, to diminish the burden which they had to carry. The preserved meat, or *pemmican*, as it is called, and other provisions, were carefully concealed under huge piles of stones, and this hiding-place was technically termed a *cache*. No precautions, however, could foil the curiosity or daunt the appetite of the Polar bears. They contrived to roll away the stones, to break open the tin cases of pemmican, and dash in pieces the bread-barrels. It may be noted that they showed an extraordinary relish for old canvas and ground coffee, but left the salt meat untouched.

"Among Dr. Kane's attendants was an Eskimo, named Hans Christian, whose skill as a marksman was brought to bear upon these ursine robbers. Hence occurred an incident,

* Dr. Elisha Kane, U.S.N., 'Arctic Explorations' (Wiley and Putnam, New York).

which seems to me full of pathos. Having encountered a she-bear and her cub, the two turned and fled; but the cub being unable to keep pace with the mother, the latter would take it up by the neck and give it a pitch forward, following rapidly to repeat the process, and occasionally halting to keep the dogs at bay. For a mile and a half the two retreated in this singular fashion, the hunter being too far off to get a shot at them; but at length, being exhausted, the mother-bear turned fiercely on the dogs, roaring and fighting strenuously in defence of her offspring; until, at length, Hans got within range, levelled his rifle, and shot her dead.

The dogs sprang forward to feast upon their victim; but—undoubtedly to their surprise—were encountered by the cub, which made so gallant a show, and roared so loudly, as effectually to dismay them. The Eskimo, however, was unrelenting, and could not be moved to pity by this curious example of filial affection; his rifle demanded another victim; the old bear was given up to the dogs, and the young one reserved for the hunter's own eating.

[" So much for the Bear," said Douglas; " I vote we now change the subject, and address ourselves to the consideration of some other quadruped."

" Very well, boys," rejoined Seymour, " let us draw lots. Here, Mountjoy, dip your hand in. Well, what have you chanced upon ?"

" The TIGER," replied Mountjoy.

" A capital choice," said Seymour; " and I'll lead off the discussion. But, first, let me give a look out;" and opening the carriage-door, he anxiously surveyed the line, both up and down. There was no sign of coming relief, however, and returning to his seat, he commenced the following conversation.]

IV.

The Felidæ: Their History and Habits.

ESCAPES FROM TIGERS—WONDERFUL ADVENTURES—ANECDOTES OF HIS FEROCITY.

["TO our choice," said Seymour, "is the Tiger—*Felis tigris*, eh? Well, he is a far more splendid fellow than the Lion; with his bright orange-yellow coat barred all over with bold bands of black, and his bright quick eyes shining with concentrated fire. Lord of the jungle—swift, fierce, daring—I wonder the fable-writers and poets did not place *him* on the throne of the animal world instead of 'Leo.' I know he is ferocious and blood-thirsty—so, I suppose, are all your great conquerors—and, perhaps, his blood is heated by the burning rays of the Tropic sun, under whose blazing orb he spends his twenty years of wild, fierce, rapacious life. But I maintain him to be the most brilliant and courageous of all the carnivora.—Lambert!"

"Well, dux?"

"Where does the tiger live?"

"In the zoological—"

"'A fool! fool! fool!'—hem, Shakspeare; I mean, where is his native home?"

"In India, Seymour."

"Good, Mountjoy; in India and the Indian Islands, but

also as far to the north-east as Chinese Tartary and the Altai Mountains. But remember, boys, that he is purely an Asiatic animal; he is unknown in Africa, Europe, or the New World. He loves the clime of the East—the burning lands of the Tropics—

> 'The hills with peaky tops engrailed,
> And many a tract of palm and rice.'

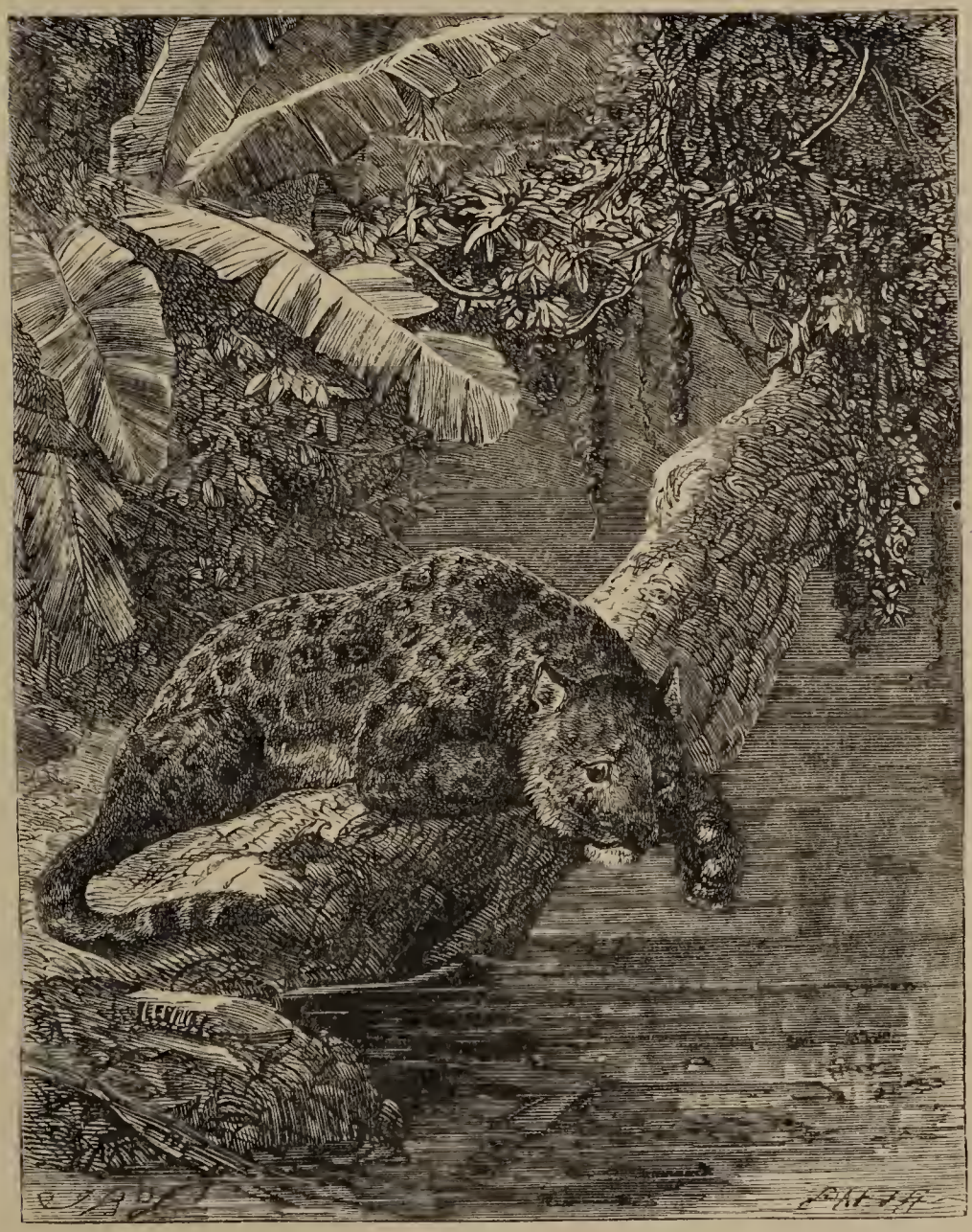
"In the New World all the great carnivora seem to be represented by lower types, as the lion by the puma, and the tiger by the jaguar, which suggests to me that Fisher cannot do better than favour us with some account of the latter and less glorious quadruped before we attack *Tigris felis*. So, fire away, old fellow—*Incipe, O amice!*"]

Closely connected with the tiger, (said Fisher,) is the JAGUAR or OUNCE (*Felis onca*), an animal of the feline kind inhabiting the tropical regions of South America, and sometimes called the panther or tiger of the New World.

It is as large as a wolf, and lives wholly upon prey. Its ground colour is a pale brownish yellow, diversified on the upper parts of the body with streaks and irregular oblong spots of black. Long continuous stripes mark the top of the back; the thighs and legs are checkered with full black spots; the breast and belly are whitish; the tail not so long as the body; the upper part—that is, of the tail—irregularly covered with large black spots, the lower with smaller ones. This handsome but ferocious animal swims and climbs capitally, and preys not only on the larger quadrupeds, but on birds, fish, tortoises, turtles' eggs, and the like. It only attacks man when rendered desperate by hunger or peril.

Mr. Bates, who has thoroughly explored the natural history of the Amazons region, supplies an incidental illustration of the jaguar's ferocity.*

* H. W. Bates, 'The Naturalist on the River Amazons.'



THE JAGUAR.

'After walking about half a mile,' he says, 'we came upon a dry water-course, where we observed first the old footmarks of a tapir, and soon after, on the margin of a curious circular hole full of muddy water, the fresh tracks of a jaguar. This latter discovery was hardly made when a rush was heard amidst the bushes on the top of a sloping

bank on the opposite side of the dried creek. We bounded forward; it was, however, too late, for the animal had sped in a few minutes far out of our reach. It was clear we had disturbed, on our approach, the jaguar whilst quenching his thirst at the water-hole. A few steps further on we saw the mangled remains of an alligator. The head, fore-quarters, and bony shell were the only parts which remained; but the meat was quite fresh, and there were many footmarks of the jaguar around the carcass, so that there was no doubt this had formed the solid part of the animal's breakfast.'

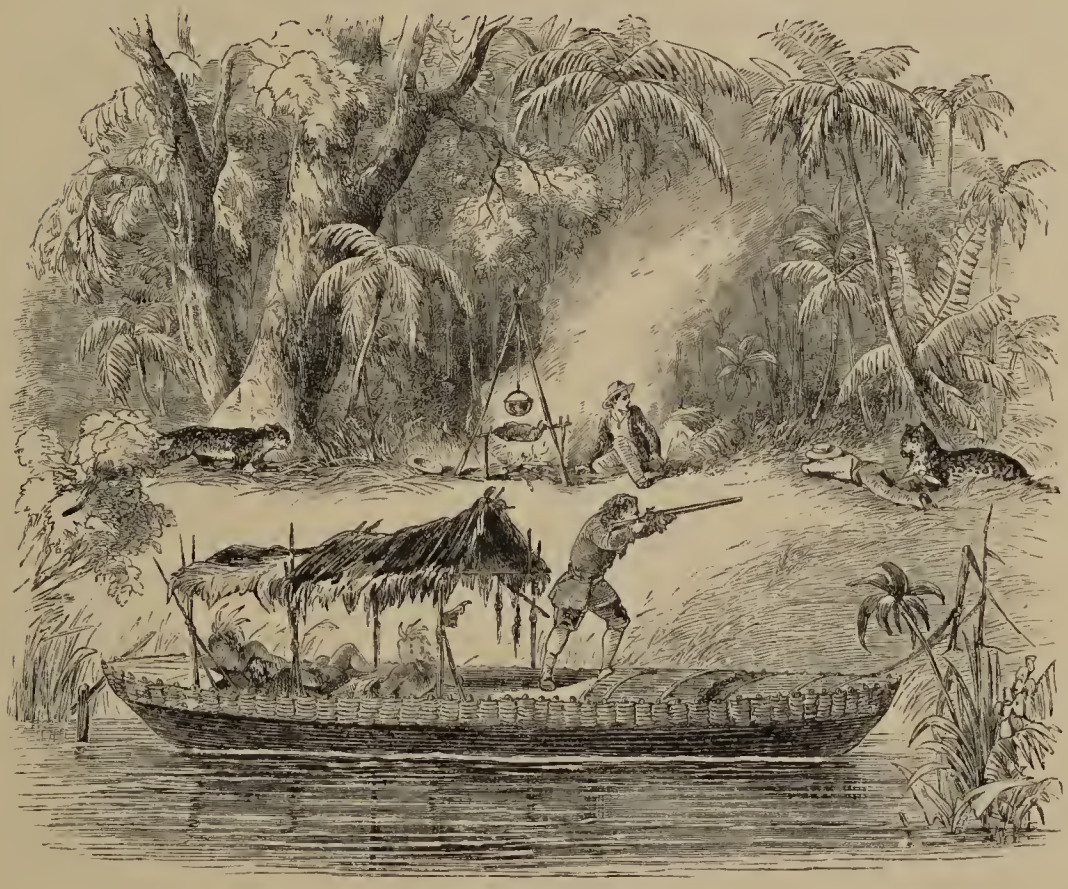
A curious story is told by Catlin * of an escape from one of these fierce animals.

He was voyaging up the river Trombutas—a Brazilian river, which, like most of the streams of equatorial America, winds its way through rich sylvan scenery—through luxuriant masses of wood, where flourish in conspicuous majesty the cedar and the palm, the caoutchouc-tree and the *Bertholletia excelsa*†—colossal trunks towering up for more than an hundred feet, straight as an arrow—gigantic ferns, flowering bushes, and creeping, climbing, trailing parasites, blending in strange and inextricable disorder; he was voyaging up the river Trombutas, listening to the sudden yell or scream that startled the silent depths of the forest, or watching the gambols of the monkeys as they swung from bough to bough, when it became necessary to put ashore and prepare the mid-day meal. And on this occasion the meal was to be a feast, for Catlin's companions had killed a white hog, and were determined to regale themselves. So they kindled a large fire—which is easily done, you may be sure, in the Brazilian woods—and set to work to roast it whole, as our ancestors roasted the boar at Yule tide. But they

* Catlin, 'North American Tribes'

† The Brazil-nut tree—a tree which attains to colossal dimensions.

had forgotten that the forest teemed with creatures which relished roasted hog as much as they themselves did, and who may have deemed them intruders upon their own peculiar domain.



CATLIN AND THE JAGUAR.

A jaguar was attracted to the spot by the delicious odour—an odour which Charles Lamb in his famous essay on 'Roast Pig' has shown to possess a powerful influence on the olfactory and gustatory nerves—but before he reached the spot where the culinary operations were going on, he found one of the voyagers, weary with his day's work, lying asleep on the grass. Not suffering very keenly from hunger, and perhaps surprised by the unwonted spectacle of the human form, the jaguar began to examine the intruder with

playful curiosity; and he gently lifted his legs, and played with them slily and softly, as a cat might play with a mouse before putting it to death.

Probably the jaguar's play would have ended, like the cat's, in blood, if Catlin had not perceived the danger of his companion. Without a moment's delay he hurried into the boat, where he had left his gun. The jaguar's head was behind the body of the sleeper. Catlin whistled gently; the brute looked up, and immediately received a ball between the eyes, which stretched him lifeless by the side of his intended victim. Imagine the sleeper's surprise when, awakened by the shot, he saw how narrowly he had escaped a horrible death!

["I don't like to intrude upon your notice," said Beauchamp—a gentlemanly youth, with a pleasant smile—"my rough and unvarnished recollections of what I have read, or—"

"Don't be bashful," cried Seymour, "we know the real genuine stuff that is in you, Beauchamp; and if you'll talk, we'll listen!"

"To be sure we will, Beauchamp," exclaimed the others.

"Well, then, I remember a very striking story about a jaguar, which I will endeavour to repeat with as much accuracy as possible, and I shall call it, with your permission, 'Three Days of Agony.'"

"A good title, at all events!" said Douglas.

"'I'll read you matter dark and dangerous,'—

hem—Shakspeare!" This interruption came, as the reader will naturally conclude, from the quotation-loving Seymour.

"You must suppose the adventurer—the hero of my tale—to be speaking in his own person."]

THREE DAYS OF AGONY.*

I need not describe to you the Orinoco, that majestic river which rolls across two-thirds of a continent—bordered for league upon league by virgin forests whose inner depths have never been trodden by man—and inferior in South America to the mighty Amazon alone.

Now, for my part, (continued Beauchamp,) and here I put myself forward, I have always been particularly fond of river-voyaging; of passing along the course of a pleasant stream, and exploring the country which it traverses, brightens, and enriches.

[" 'The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,'"

quoted Seymour.]

You come upon sweet fairy isles, nestling in the bosom of placid waters, and crowned with leaf and blossom, like a beauty with a wreath of flowers; or you wind into little silent creeks, where the plover and the king-fisher pursue their solitary pastime; or you dip into still sequestered nooks, hidden behind the projecting banks, and tenanted by lazy carp and wary trout; or you float under the shadow of melancholy boughs, from one bright landscape to another, all differing in character, but all equal in loveliness and interest. Such is river-voyaging in England—what must it be in Tropical America, where the colossal trees, as you have already heard, interlace their mighty branches to form an almost impenetrable canopy—where the shores are clothed with giant ferns—where birds of rich and brilliant plumage dart to and fro, like beams of many-coloured light, and a thousand strange forms and sounds perplex and yet entertain the voyager?

* This tale is from a German source.

Through a succession of wondrous scenes I made my way up the Orinoco in a certain bright May month—never mind how many years ago. It was near the end of the hot season; the river-waters were very low; and at intervals, as we rowed along, we caught sight of openings through the dense underbrush, which had been made by different animals on their way to the river in search of prey, or to quench their thirst. On both banks, amid the rushes and slime, huge crocodiles were lying, lazily basking in the sun, where its rays penetrated through the leafy forest.

It was on the 10th of May, and about the beginning of the rainy season—when the parched and faded landscapes suddenly revive, as if touched by an enchanter's wand—and we moored our little vessel off a small islet or rock of granite, rising perpendicularly out of the water, in the thought that there we should be unmolested by the jaguars.

Stripping myself of my clothes, which I made up into a bundle, and held aloft in one hand, I leaped into the river. and swam to the island rock. Scrambling to the summit, I found I could just reach with my hand the lower branches of a magnificent mango-tree. After I had dressed myself, I drew down one of the largest of these, which dragged along with it several others; and their elastic force, as they bounded back, raised me suddenly from the ground, and lifted me into the very midst of the giant tree. 'What a delightful night,' thought I, 'might I spend here in this leafy bower, out of the reach of jaguars!' I resolved to realize the idea. My Zambos, a half-negro, half-Indian race, brought me my hammock from the boat, and having securely fixed it among the branches, left me, promising to return at sunrise. Fatigued with the day's exertions, I was soon asleep, and nothing occurred to disturb my repose.

When I again opened my eyes, I was conscious of a feel-

ing of severe pain; probably the pain awoke me. I was wet to the skin. Heavy rain had fallen in the night, and the leather of my hammock having stretched, I found myself imprisoned, as it were, in a wet sack. After some vigorous efforts I got free, and contrived to rise and look about me. The sun's face was obscured by a thick fog; no ground was visible—neither earth nor sky—water, water everywhere—the rains had fallen, the waters had risen—the solitary rock-isle was completely overflowed—no vessel, no Zambos could I discover!

It was evident that I was now a prisoner in the tree, which, as it was neither a banana nor a breadfruit tree, could supply me with nothing to satisfy my hunger but its leaves and young shoots. A cheerless prospect this for a poor creature whose limbs were rigid with cold and damp, and who already felt the pangs of a keen appetite. Robinson Crusoe, or Alexander Selkirk in his solitary island, was far better provided for than I was. To beguile my mind from the contemplation of so pitiful a position, I began to explore my new domain. Creeping along the thick branches of the tree, which afforded me a sufficiently solid support, I was met, on a sudden, by the glitter of two fiery eyes, and saw before me an animal, for which, from my childhood upward, I have had an intense aversion, an enormous lizard of the species called *Iguana*. I am almost ashamed to confess that this harmless reptile gave me a genuine alarm, and I rapidly retreated along the branch, which afforded me a resting-place, only, to my great annoyance, to encounter a second iguano, whose flashing tail was describing superb spirals in the air.

Do you believe in what is called *fascination*—that singular influence which the snake, for instance, seems to exercise on the bird, fixing it to the ground, and rendering

it incapable of escape? I do; and that it is the result of extreme terror, producing a species of partial paralysis. The sight of the iguanas assuredly fascinated *me;* I could not remove from them my anxious gaze; but continued to watch their movements with the most uneasy attention. A scorching fever took possession of me. My hands burned, my temples throbbed. Seated on a forked branch of the tree, and supporting my aching head in my hands, I saw the whole country around me transformed into a waste of waters—the vast extent of the inundation depriving me of all hope that my friends would discover my position; the rains beat against my face; the loud peals of the thunder reverberated through the forest like the roar of a fiercely-contended battle; the sharp lightning darted its arrowy flames across the leaden-coloured sky; the yells of wild animals at intervals rose above the roll of the thunder;—can you imagine a scene more likely to appal even the boldest spirit? And then, too, I was so tormented with hunger that I was compelled to chew a few mango-leaves to appease its keenest pangs.

Almost as if they conjectured my despair, or impelled by that gregarious instinct which all animals feel in the hour of peril, the two lizards ventured to approach me. My emotions at this moment only a Dante could conceive and describe; such was the strange effect which their gigantic size, their flaming eyeballs, and the shifting metallic colours that seemed to waver about their bodies, produced on my excited imagination. One of them was almost close to me, when, my antipathy inspiring me with strength and courage, I struck him heavily on the head. Both my persecutors immediately disappeared with a speed which surprised me, and posted themselves on the other side of the tree.

'Like a wounded snake,' the weary day 'dragged its slow length along;'* but, at last, evening approached. The vultures hovered in clouds over my head; flocks of herons and flamingoes skimmed over the waters, and aroused the slumbering crocodiles, which, darting up to seize them, fell themselves a prey to the ravenous jaws of the jaguars; immense 'fleets' of tortoises raised their broad shell-like armour above the surface of the river; whilst bands of Cebidæ, screaming and chattering, swung from tree to tree, and indulged in a thousand grotesque gambols. Night came, and the huge bats, large-eared, and with wings a couple of feet wide—*Dysopes perotis* is the name of the species—fluttered about me, and a myriad fire-flies, kindling their tiny lamps, adorned the forest with a fairy illumination. By the help of my knife, I succeeded in fixing my hammock securely, and overpowered by grief, weariness, and hunger, fell asleep.

The second day of my captivity dawned, but no boat, no vessel was in sight; no sound could I hear but the rush of the winds and the roll of the waters. By degrees the morning mists cleared away, and the sun shone forth, and the various voices of Nature all at once awoke. Then again the mist gathered, wrapping everything in an almost impenetrable veil, so that I felt as if the tomb were swallowing me up alive. I abandoned all hope of life, and, as one who trembles on the brink of eternity, humbled my soul before my God. What chance, indeed, was there that my companions should discover me among the thick leaves, and shrouded by a dense fog!

Suddenly, a low growl—close at hand—pierced through the air, and sent a chill to my very heart. I rose hastily, for I knew it was the cry of the jaguar. I heard a rustling

* "And like a wounded snake drags its slow length along."—*Pope.*

among the leaves; the branches snapped and cracked; and hark! a sound as of a living creature falling from the tree, and struggling in the water. I hoped that the river had swept away its prey, or that it had fallen a victim to the alligators.

The mist once more cleared away, drawing off, like a stage-curtain, which gradually reveals the various scenes disposed behind it. And, ah me, when I glanced at the rock-island which had beguiled me into my dreary captivity, what a spectacle met my eyes! The jaguar himself, still dripping from his plunge into the waves, had contrived to scramble out, and now crouched upon the rock, facing me with hideous stare! Motionless he sat, and watched me! Scarce six feet intervened between him and the end of the branches; he seemed to be calculating the length and force of his spring.

Failing in his first attempt to reach them, he darted towards the trunk, and with the help of his long sharp claws began slowly to climb it. But I felt calm and composed, for I knew the advantage over him which my position gave me. I cautiously descended to a lower bough, one hand armed with a stake which I had cut and sharpened, the other brandishing my good knife. I let my antagonist advance, step by step—plunging his keen claws into the tree's smooth bark—his emeralds fixed upon me with a glare of bloodthirsty eagerness. Leaning my knee for support on an angle formed by the division of the branches, I looked down, and calmly admired the graceful agility, strength, and suppleness of the jaguar. At length his hot, rank breath scorched my face; his fore paws were almost within reach of my hand. I fixed the point of my knife firmly in the bark of the tree, and raising my sharpened stake, dealt the fierce brute a violent blow on the head. He uttered a low growl,

but did not give way one inch, only shifting his position so as to shelter his head under an overhanging branch. As I saw that my plan of attack had failed, I now drove the stake into his gaping jaws, and the intense pain of the wound forced him to recede a little. He gathered up his body like a cat, and raised one of his fore paws to catch a bough, which would have placed him on a level with me, and so given him no inconsiderable advantage.

Now, indeed, my situation became critical; his five huge claws actually touched my knee, and from his violent panting I knew that he was about to make a supreme effort. Quick as thought, I stooped down, knife in hand, and plunged it up to the haft in the creature's eye! He uttered a long low wail of agony, and tried to strike at me with his claws, while his blood poured over my hand. But in his anguish he had again drawn back, and I once more struck him with my stake, forcing him still further down, until, maddened by rage and pain, he made a last desperate spring, lost his footing, and fell headlong into the river. There his fate was soon decided. A score of crocodiles pounced upon him immediately, and, hugely to my satisfaction, devoured him.

Now I could draw breath and look around me. Like a vast dome, the mist still hung suspended over the rising waters. For myself, I was starving, wet, cold, shivering. My old foes, the lizards, whose society I now longed for—they would have supplied me with a meal—had disappeared. I chewed some of the leaves of the tree; they did not satisfy my hunger, but deadened its pangs. Did I descend from the tree to the rock below, I should be more easily seen by my Zambos, if they came in search of me, but I should be also exposed to the attacks of beasts of prey. Hunger filled me with strange pains, and my appetite was stimulated by the sight of the splendid tortoises floating within my

reach, but how could I hope to secure a footing on the wet, slimy rock, which the jaguar could hardly climb? It was now that I recognised the full extent of my peril. My Zambos would necessarily have returned long before, if the boat had not been swept by the rushing waters to a great distance from my prison. Despair made me faint and sick. The gloomy and obscene vultures which perched themselves near me, craned forward their ashy-coloured heads as if conscious that I should become their prey. I cut off a long straight branch, and fastened to one end of it a piece of white linen. This I hoisted in the tree as a signal for my Zambos, but it was soon rendered useless by a heavy shower, which made it hang down instead of floating in the air.

The third night of my strange captivity found me lying in my hammock, suffering alternately from the pangs of hunger, thirst, and sickness; not a light, not even the smallest star twinkled through the fog. Oh, how long and dreary seemed that night! Would morn never appear? Surely minutes were prolonged to hours, and hours to days—I seemed to live a lifetime in that night! I could not sleep, so severe was my physical pain, so great were my mental sufferings; I even longed for death, as the blessed end of all my anguish and all my sorrow.

At length the wind partially cleared away the mist, and a faint glimmer in the east told me that another day was dawning on the re-awakened world.

But I gazed hopeless as the sky reddened, and the mist vanished, and the sun came forth, like a bridegroom, from the golden chambers of the east.

At intervals, I heard a sound, like the noise of fire-arms, echoing over the water, but I deemed that my fancy deceived me, or that the savage tribes which inhabit the banks of the Orinoco were at war among themselves; any way, there was

nothing in it to alarm me, for I was past alarm; or to cheer me, for I had abandoned hope. I could not rise, for my trembling limbs failed me; and I lay, perhaps, for some hours, in a state of partial unconsciousness, a dreamless, swooning being.

All at once I was aroused by the loud rattle of musketry. I seemed to awake. A sudden vigour shot through my limbs; I even tried to shout, but my voice fell back unheard. Soon I perceived that the firing came nearer and nearer. At the well-known sound my hopes revived; my energies returned; the blood flowed freely through my veins. Another and another shot, and a canoe came in sight round a projection of the rocky bank. Hurrah! I can see my Zambos in it—they have not deserted me! I can distinguish the man at the helm, and again I seek to make myself heard; but, as yet, in vain. Round and about, and across the river, and along the reedy marge, in every direction wheels the light canoe; my faithful attendants are seeking their master; ever and anon firing a shot to attract my notice; and now they are tossing to and fro opposite my prison. Woe's me! Shall I lose this one last chance of escape? Another, and a vigorous effort. I shriek aloud—aloud, a sort of wild despairing cry, whose echoes startle me as they roll away through the forest—it is heard; the Zambos shout in return, a joyous, exhilarating cheer—they moor their boat at the foot of the tree—I am saved!

Spent with fatigue and want, I fall into their faithful arms, and am transported in safety to the canoe, thanking God that in his mercy he has delivered me from a terrible death.

[The interest of Beauchamp's story had held the boys breathless and speechless until its conclusion. They then recovered themselves sufficiently to overwhelm the *raconteur* with their praises, and testify their satisfaction by a hearty cheer.

"Yet the jaguar," said Seymour, "can hardly be of as truculent a character as he is sometimes represented, if the anecdote be true which I have heard of an encounter between him and an Indian. The latter, on emerging from some bushes through which he had been forcing his way, saw a jaguar standing in the road not ten paces distant, and eying him with a glance of mingled curiosity and fierceness. The Indian having neither bow nor dart was temporarily panic-stricken, but, recovering his presence of mind, he took off his broad-brimmed hat and bowed low to the very ground, with, 'Muits bem dias, meu senhor,' or, 'A very good morning, sir.' Such courtesy appears to have affected the jaguar profoundly, for he turned slowly round and marched down the road with becoming dignity."*

"The black tiger or jaguar," remarked Fisher, "seldom attacks man, and the Indians of the Amazon will charge him with as little fearlessness as a British soldier would charge a Chinaman! They chase him upon the broad grassy campos, running him down with horses, and dexterously catching him in the lasso. And, mind you, they fling the rope with so much precision that the tiger once caught has no chance of escape. He is quickly strangled, his legs are tied, and, flung over the horse's back like a sack of meal, he is ignominiously borne away to the hut of his captor. For the indifference with which he is regarded by man, he revenges himself, however, upon inferior animals. The Brazilians believe that the alligator is paralyzed with fear at the sight of him, and will even permit him to eat off its tail without resistance! The jaguar must be a good judge of dainties, at all events, for the tail of the alligator is the only part relished by epicures. There are, however, several well-authenticated stories which show that he is,

* Edwards, 'A Voyage up the River Amazon.'

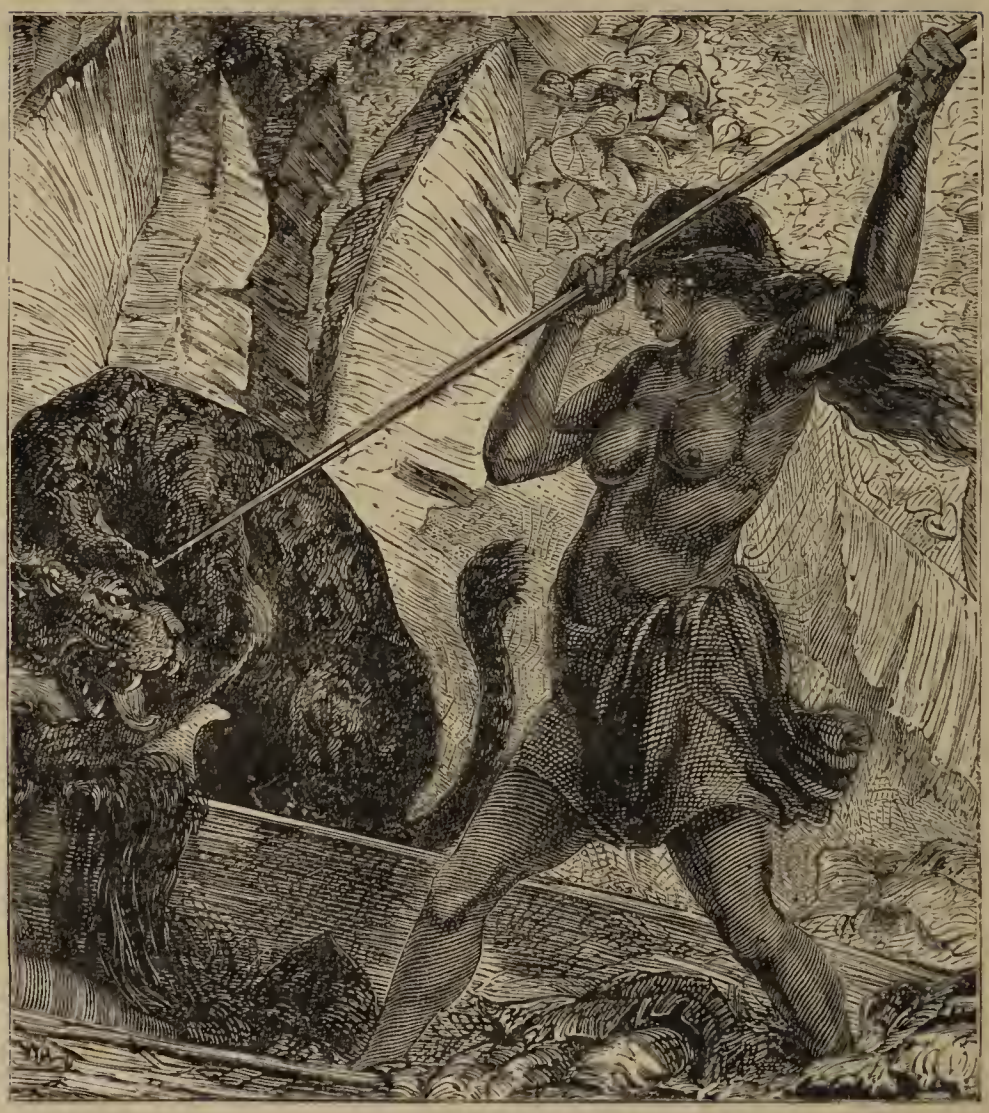
under some circumstances, a dangerous antagonist; and I would recommend you not to plunge into the depths of a Brazilian forest without the protection afforded by a good rifle."]

A DESCENDANT OF THE AMAZONS.

I have read in a French book of travels,* (continued Fisher,) a remarkable experience of South American life. It occurred in that romantic and beautiful valley of the Amazons which is, as it were, a world within a world; a land of fable and legend, no less than a region of natural wonders. During our voyage on the Atacoari, says the writer I refer to, we were witnesses, not, indeed, of the event—it took place at some distance from us—but of the consequences of an event, in which an ethnological enthusiast and advocate of old beliefs might have been excused for recognizing an irrefragable proof of the existence of those warrior women of the river Nhamondas who have afforded a theme of discussion to travellers and savants, from Orellana—he first saw them in their manner as they live, and named them *Amazons*—down to La Condamine. The latter, it is true, never beheld them with his own eyes, but on the faith of the statements of a Brazilian officer, founded on the recollections of the Brazilian officer's deceased grandfather, thought it his duty as a French academician to certify the existence of these chivalrous females.

A Ticuna Indian and his wife had set out in their little canoe to provision themselves with a supply of edible roots in a plantation which they possessed on the left bank of the Atacoari. As they skirted the rich leafy woodlands, a jaguar,

* M. Paul Marcoy, 'Voyage de l'Océan Pacifique à l'Océan Atlantique (Tour du Monde, 1866, 2nd vol.)



A WIFE'S DEVOTEDNESS.

concealed among the thickets, suddenly sprung upon the Ticuna, who was stationed in the fore part of the canoe; but whether he miscalculated his leap, or whether the muddy soil gave way under him, it is certain that, instead of falling on the Indian's shoulders as he had intended, he only struck his skull with his right paw. The five keen claws with which the paw was armed, literally scalped the unfortunate native, who rolled, faint and bleeding, to the bottom of the canoe, while the jaguar, his head out of water,

his foaming mouth wide open, his eyes glowing with murderous fire, crouched on the gunwale of the boat and prepared to seize his victim. In this he would probably have succeeded, if the Ticuna woman had not gallantly seized her husband's spear, and, with both hands, plunged it into the animal's throat. The jaguar, howling, fell back into the water, struggled for a few minutes, and all was over!

Thus happily freed from her enemy, the Ticuna, instead of falling on her knees like a simple woman, and pouring out her thanks to her god Tupana, resumed her place in the stern of the canoe, rowed bravely homeward, and bore her miserable husband to his hammock.

'It was two hours after this occurrence,' says our traveller, 'that we arrived at the Ticuna's hut, and endeavoured to obtain some refreshment. The Amazon, while giving us some bananas and roots, related her achievement, simply, without gesture, without emotion, and as if it were a passage of her everyday life. Nothing could be more impressive than this calm demeanour; the demeanour, I think, of one able to accomplish even greater deeds if the necessity for them were ever forced upon her.'

["Brave Ticuna!" cried Douglas; "if she had the form of a woman she had the heart of a man."

"She must have been a descendant," said Mountjoy, "of the Amazons of old, whose martial appearance struck terror into the souls of the Greeks."

"You forget," rejoined Beauchamp, "that the Amazons of mythology were an Asiatic race. But, perhaps, they emigrated to America after the death of their queen Penthesilea at the siege of Troy!"]

AN ESCAPE FROM A TIGER.

To return to the tiger: I have heard, (said Seymour,) of a remarkable escape which occurred in the north-east of Hindustan. He who escaped was an English soldier, armed only with a bayonet, and the circumstances are thus related by the officer to whose detachment he belonged :—

It was after a long day's march of fifteen miles, across a country where a road could with difficulty be traced—and that road only the rough channels dug out by the violent rains—that we arrived at an unusually swampy jungle, which, from its extent and the fatigued state of the soldiers and cattle, I thought it prudent to defer passing until the following morning.

'I had observed several flocks of wild peacocks and turkeys while the tents were pitching, which always frequent the same dry heathy ground adjacent to jungles that tigers do; but from our numbers, the compactness of our encampment, and the precaution I had taken of ordering fires to be kindled in various directions, I conceived we had little to fear from any visit those gentlemen might be tempted to pay us.

'I had but just entered my tent, and wrapped myself in my boat-cloak, with the view of securing a little repose, when I was startled by the sound of a musket. I rushed instantly to the entrance of my tent, and was questioning the sentinel as to the direction of the sound, when a huge tiger, with monstrous bounds, passed within a few yards of us, with one of our brave fellows struggling in his jaws. My sentinel promptly fired; but the agitation of the moment interfered with the accuracy of his aim. The ball to all appearance struck him, for he immediately increased his speed. We tracked his course by the blood which flowed

from him, or his unhappy victim, and had already penetrated into the jungle several hundred yards before we began to despair of finding the latter alive, and of rescuing him from his awful position. Judge of our horror on suddenly hearing a kind of sullen growl or roar, which made the hills echo a still more dreadful sound; and judge, too, of our joy, a moment afterwards, on being greeted with a shout from our lost companion about fifty yards further in the jungle than we had penetrated, which was eagerly taken up by those who had joined with me in the pursuit, and in a few moments more we met him limping towards us, with as joyous a face as ever I witnessed, even after the most flattering success.

'The following account of his escape he afterwards committed to paper: I was just returning, at a good brisk pace, from one of the posts down the jungle, where I had been taking some victuals to my bedfellow, when I heard a kind of rustling noise in some bushes, about six or seven yards behind me, and, before I could turn round to ascertain the cause, I was pounced upon, and knocked down with such force as to deprive me of my senses, till I arrived opposite your tent; when the sudden report of a musket, together with a kind of twitching in my thigh, brought me to myself, and to a sense of the great danger in which I was; but, nevertheless, I did not despair. I now began to think of some plan of saving myself; and, though carried away very rapidly, I felt, as well as saw, that your sentinel's ball had, instead of hitting the tiger, struck me, and that I was losing blood very fast.

'I remembered that the bayonet was in my belt, and reflected that if it were possible for me to draw it, I might yet escape the horrible death that awaited me. I with difficulty put my arm back, and found it, and several times

attempted to draw it from its sheath; but, from my position, I was unable. To describe the fear I now felt would be impossible; I thought it was all over. At last, thank Heaven! after another attempt with my utmost force, I drew it out, and instantly plunged it into his shoulder. He bounded aside, and his eyes flashed frightfully; he let me down, but instantly seized me again above the hip, which at first prevented me from drawing my breath. I now had, from the change of position, a fair opportunity of killing the monster and saving my life. I stabbed him behind the shoulder several times as deeply as the bayonet would enter; he staggered and fell, and again letting me go, rolled several yards beyond me. I now thought myself safe; and was getting up, when he rose, and, with a dreadful roar, again attempted to seize me, but again fell down, and rolled close to my feet. I now had the advantage of a fallen enemy which I forgot not to turn to the best account, and again plunged my bayonet into his side, which I suppose, from his struggles, pierced his heart. I then fell upon my knees, and endeavoured, but from the fulness of my heart I was unable, to return thanks aloud to Almighty God for his gracious goodness in delivering me from so terrible a death. I rose, and hallooed; my halloo was returned, and just afterwards I met you, or perhaps I might have been lost from my weakness.

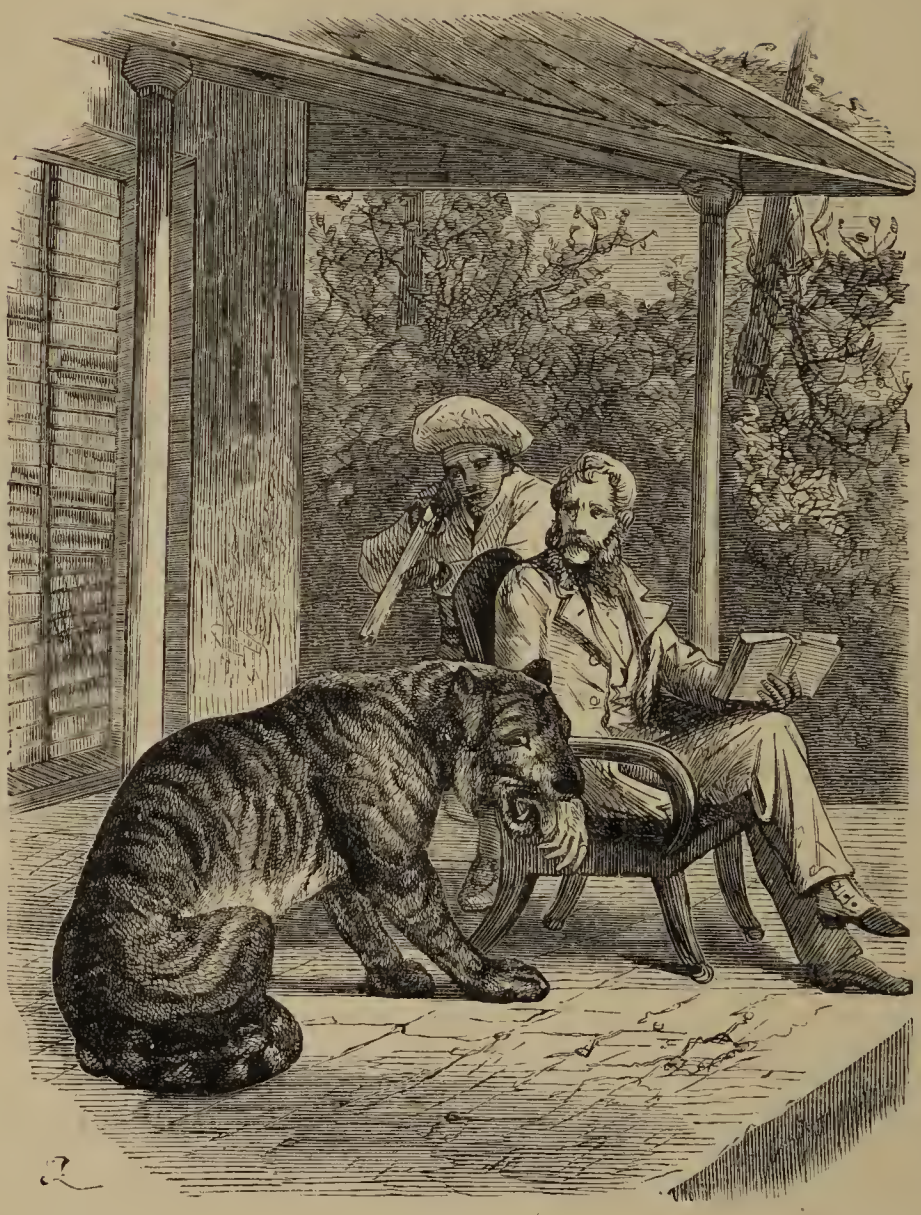
'It would appear that the tiger, either from the distance of his leap, or the hardness of the soldier's cartouch-box, fortunately missed his hold, and seized him, after he had knocked him down, by his clothes, the cartouch-box saving him from being bitten. But I am convinced that never did any man, if we take into consideration the distance he was carried before he released himself, and the circumstance of his being wounded by the ball intended for the tiger, which

directed us what road to follow, more providentially escape to all appearance an inevitable death.'

["That's good," said Mountjoy; "I wonder what the soldier's sensations were as the tiger carried him along. But, I suppose, as he himself seems to say, that he thought only of the best mode of saving his life. By-the-by, who knows the meaning of the word *Tiger?* It's much the same in most languages, I believe."

"Tiger, and Tigris—the river Tigris," said Fisher, "are both derived from a Median word, which signifies a shaft or arrow, and expresses the rapidity of the stream, and the swiftness of the beast of prey."

"I believe," said Seymour, "all attempts to tame these ferocious animals have failed. When they appear completely subjected, some little incident will arouse the latent cruelty of their nature. I remember to have read of an English gentleman in India who kept a young tiger about him as a pet, and nearly lost his life through the strange fancy. It would seem that one evening he was sitting outside his bungalow reading, with his pet—could he not have found a better?—couched down beside him. One hand hung by his side, while the other held his book. Being absorbed in his studies he scarcely observed that the animal had begun to lick his hand, until he heard a low growl, and looking down, he saw that the hand was covered with blood from a scratch. Instantly he knew that the fatal instinct had been excited, and not having any weapon, felt himself to be in a dangerous predicament. If he withdrew his hand, the tiger would assuredly spring. Fortunately, at this moment, his servant appeared, and calling to him, he bade him go into the house, fetch a loaded gun, and shoot the tiger dead on the spot. He then sat immovable, betraying no symptom of alarm or anxiety, and allowing the tiger to lick the blood



AN ANXIOUS MOMENT.

at its pleasure. But unutterably painful must have been those minutes of suspense—minutes into which all the fears and emotions of a life-time were necessarily crowded!—and great must have been the mental relief when his servant returned, and approaching very stealthily, so as not to disturb the animal, took a steady aim, and shot him through the heart."

A pause ensued, but it was of no long duration. On an urgent petition for some more stories from the Fat Boy, who seemed as insatiable in his mental as in his physical appetite, Douglas volunteered a contribution to the general stock.

"Now, by your knitted brow, and

'Eyes in a fine frenzy rolling,'"

ejaculated Seymour, "you have something on your conscience. Come—expound, reveal, unbosom yourself; do not be a 'niggard of your speech.'"

"'I know not if the tale be true,
As told to me I tell it you,'"

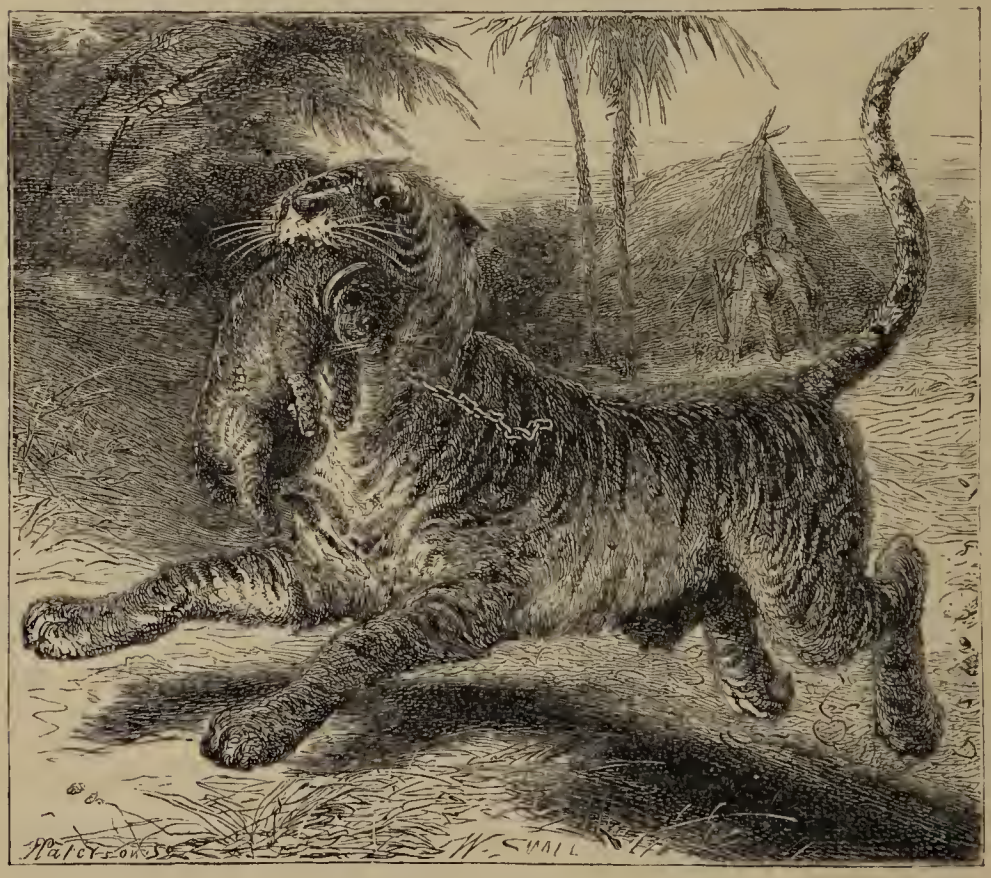
cried Douglas, laughing; "there's a quotation for you, Ned, which you will have heard before, I think. Well, my story is a short one, and here it is."]

A SHORT STORY.

A small company of British officers, who had been enjoying the pleasures of the chase in the Indian jungle, were returning to their bungalows, when, in a dense portion of the underwood, they discovered a tiger-whelp, not more than ten or twelve days old. They could not resist the temptation of securing such a prize, and carried it with them to their quarters, where the cub was secured by a dog-collar and chain to the pole of their tent, fed, caressed, and allowed to gambol at its will.

Night came on, and the officers were regaling themselves with cheroots, Bass's ale, and a game at whist after the day's arduous sport, when their laughter was checked, and their mirth arrested, by a sound that can strike terror to the stoutest heart—the roar of a Bengal tiger.

In an instant the playful whelp was transformed into the fierce tiger-cat, pulling at its chain with its utmost strength, and responding to the terrible voice without by a long low wail. The gay company sat panic-stricken, when, suddenly, into their very midst bounded the ferocious tigress. No heed did she give to the officers, who, recovering from their momentary fright, seized sabre, pistol, gun—whatever weapon lay at hand—but, snapping the chain which bound



MATERNAL AFFECTION.

her whelp at a single jerk, she caught it by the neck, and turning to the entrance of the tent, bounded off at full speed. None will regret that the officers, in their admiration of the tigress's affection for her young, suffered her to make her escape uninjured.

["If you will allow me, I will cap Douglas's anecdote of a tigress's gentle care for her young, with an instance of her ferocity. It occurred," said Fisher, turning to his manuscript volume, "in 1792, and the victim was the son of Sir Hector Monro."]

'We went,' says the narrator, 'on shore on Sangar Island to shoot deer, of which we saw innumerable tracks, as well as of tigers; notwithstanding which, we continued our diversion till near three o'clock, when, sitting down by the side of a jungle to refresh ourselves, a roar like thunder was heard, and an immense tiger seized on Lieutenant Monro, and rushed again into the jungle, dragging him through the thickest bushes and trees, everything giving way to his enormous strength; a tigress accompanied his progress. The united agonies of horror, regret, and fear, rushed at once upon us. I fired on the tiger—he seemed agitated; my companion fired also, and in a few minutes after this my unfortunate friend came up to us, bathed in blood. All medical assistance was vain, and he expired in the space of twenty-four hours, having received such deep wounds from the claws and teeth of the animal as rendered his recovery hopeless. A large fire, consisting of ten or twelve whole trees, was blazing by us at the time this accident took place; and ten or more of the natives with us. The human mind can scarcely form any idea of this scene of horror. We had hardly pushed our boat from that accursed shore, when the tigress made her appearance, almost raging mad, and remained on the sand all the time we continued in sight.'

["Bravo, Fisher," exclaimed Mountjoy, "you have always something good to tell us. Did you not say that the word *Tiger* meant swiftness?"

"Yes; and the ancients have numerous references to the speed with which he pursues his prey."]

In the East, even to the present day, (continued Fisher,) a tiger-hunt is a favourite pastime with Hindu princes and British officers. As soon as any particular locality is known to be infested by these beasts of prey, a grand chase is organized; and, mounted on from ten to thirty well-trained elephants, the Nimrods of the East, rifle in hand, go forth to slay. It is no idle pastime, moreover, as the tiger is contemptuous of danger, and turns upon his pursuer, climbing the elephant's huge bulk, in his frenzy, and often succeeding in severely wounding the driver or his *sahib*. These hunts not unfrequently terminate in a fatal catastrophe, though, since the introduction of the rifle, such incidents are of rarer occurrence than in the days when the British officers' usual weapon was a Brown Bess, or a fowling-piece that, on all critical occasions, missed fire.

A somewhat ludicrous anecdote appeared in the *Literary Gazette*, many years ago, from the pen of an Anglo-Indian correspondent:—

'Our annual supply of good things having reached us this morning, we were enjoying a bottle of some delicious Burgundy and "La Rose" after dinner, when we were roused by violent screams in the direction of the village. We were all up in the instant, and despatched several men to the spot. Our speculations on the cause were soon set at rest by the appearance of two *hircarras* (messengers), and a lad with a vessel of milk on his head. For this daily supply they had gone several miles, and had nearly reached the camp, when, having outwalked the boy, they were alarmed by his vociferations: "Oh, uncle, let go—I am your child, uncle—let me go!" They thought the boy mad, and, it being very dark, cursed his uncle, and desired him to make haste; but the same wild exclamations continuing, they ran back, and found a huge tiger hanging on his tattered cold-

weather doublet. The *hircarras* attacked the beast most manfully with their javelin-headed sticks, and, adding their screams to his, soon brought the whole village, men, women, and children, armed with all sorts of missiles, to the rescue; and it was their discordant yells that made us exchange our good fare for the jungles of Morwun. The "lord of the black rock," for such is the designation of the tiger, was one of the most ancient *bourgeois* of Morwun: his freehold was Kálá-patár, between this and Mugurwar, and his reign for a long series of years had been unmolested, notwithstanding his numerous acts of aggression on his bovine subjects: indeed, only two nights before, he was disturbed gorging on a buffalo which belonged to a poor oilman of Morwun. Whether this tiger was an incarnation of one of the Mori lords of Morwun, tradition does not say; but neither gun, bow, nor spear, had ever been raised against him. In return for this forbearance, it is said, he never preyed upon man, or if he seized one, would, upon being entreated with the endearing epithet of *mamoo* or uncle, let go his hold; and this accounted for the little ragged urchin using a phrase which almost prevented the *hircarras* returning to his rescue.'

["I should not have cared," remarked Mountjoy, "to have tempted my uncle too often, had I been one of the Morwunites. And as for you, young Lambert," he said, turning to the Fat Boy, "I am sure he would never have spared such a fleshy little nephew! What a delicious titbit he would have found you!"

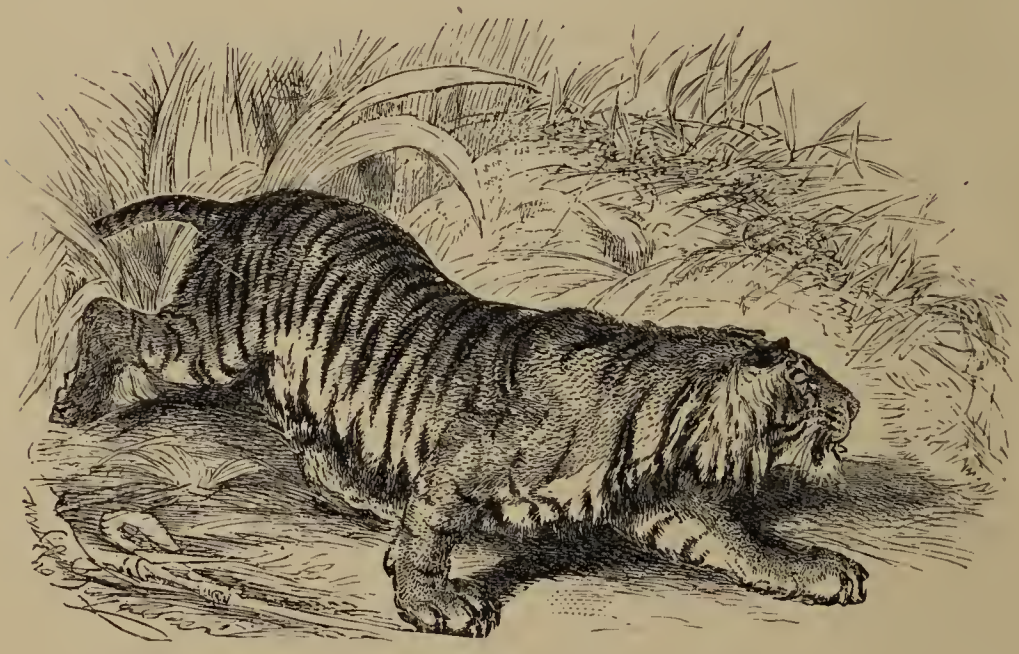
"Come, stop your jokes," rejoined the Fat Boy, angrily, "I wish I was as near like a skeleton as you are."

"'Sharp misery had worn him to the bones!'"

exclaimed Seymour, "but really I think we may give our oleaginous friend a little rest."

"I saw a tiger," said the Fat Boy, "at the Zoological Gardens, in the vacation. Isn't he a splendid fellow though!"]

Yes, (remarked Fisher;) if one of the most ferocious he is also one of the handsomest of quadrupeds. The general colour of his coat is a bright orange-yellow, but the face, throat, and under-side of the belly are nearly white; the whole richly barred with a succession of transverse bands of glossy black, which contrast very vividly with the yellow ground.



A ROYAL TIGER.

The stripes are smaller about the face and breast than on the bulk of the body, and are continued, like rings, upon the tail, which terminates with a black tip. The animal's colours, in his native jungle, are of intense brilliancy, but they lose their lustre when he has been detained even for a short time in captivity. In size, he is usually inferior to the lion, but occasional examples surpass even the so-called king of beasts, and have been known to measure fifteen feet from the nose to the tip of the tail. The largest are those of India, which are termed *Royal Tigers*.

The tiger is a native of Tropical Asia, but though spreading as far as China, Chinese Tartary, and the Altai Mountains, Hindustan may be considered as his head-quarters. In ancient times his range was wider, and stretched even to the borders of Europe; for the classical writers apply to this animal the epithet Hyrcanian, and Hyrcania lay to the south of the Caspian Sea.

To the same group or family belong the tiger-cats, such as the *Felis Nepalensis* and *Felis Javanensis;* the former inhabiting the mountains of Nepaul, and the latter those of Java. Then we have the *Felis Bengalensis* of India; in Africa, the Suval (*Felis Suval*); and in America, the Ocelot (*Felis Pardalis*), the Chati (*Felis Nutis*), the Pampas Cat or Pæjero (*Felis Pajeros*), and the Mongay (*Felis tigrina*). All these are destructive in proportion to their strength.

And now, gentlemen, I will conclude my notes upon the tiger for the present with a relation—always provided you do not object—

["Hear, hear, hear!" exclaimed Seymour.]

—of Dr. Von Tschudi's wonderful escape from one of these fierce and daring assailants.*

THE TRAVELLER'S ADVENTURE.

Weary with a long day's journey, our traveller had flung himself down to rest under the shade of a wide-spreading tree, laying his musket, his constant companion, by his side. Suddenly his glance alighted on some plants which he had never seen before, and on rising to examine them with all a botanist's enthusiasm, his attention was attracted by a rustling noise in the neighbouring bushes. Turning round to enquire into the cause, a tigress, with her two cubs sporting about her, started up between him and the tree

* Dr. Von Tschudi, 'Travels in Peru.'

where he had left his weapon. The beast immediately stood still, uttering a low fierce growl, and the whelps, as if astonished at an object so novel as man, paused in their gambols. Dr. Von Tschudi was well aware that a tigress is never so formidable as when she fancies her young to be in danger, and standing in the presence of that ferocious beast, utterly defenceless and unarmed, he felt for a moment all the agony of despair. Travellers in wild regions, however, are generally made of tolerably stout material. Tschudi soon recovered his presence of mind, and knowing the influence of the human eye upon wild animals, he sternly fixed his gaze upon the tigress to prevent her from advancing.

It was a strange spectacle, the man and the beast, thus confronting each other in an attitude of rigid composure. The power of intellect was acknowledged by the animal, and she stood as if riveted to the spot. The cubs, however, were not under the spell of the human eye, and, darting forward, played about the traveller's legs. The sight of this disturbed the tigress; she began to roar and lash her sides violently with her tail, prepared to spring upon Tschudi if he touched her little ones. At that instant, the doctor, still fixing his eyes upon the mother, stooped down, and passing his hand over the back of the young tigers, who seemed quite sensible of the caress, he observed that the tigress was evidently pleased with the partiality he lavished on her offspring. Her growling ceased, and she resumed her impassive attitude. The two cubs, continuing their frolic, now darted away from the traveller, biting and chasing each other, like kittens, until at length they strayed beyond their mother's sight or hearing. Her maternal anxiety was aroused, and she turned in search of them. Dr. Von Tschudi seized the opportunity to get behind a bush which

concealed him from the tigress, and then, by a short détour, he made for the place where he had left his gun. He was not compelled to use it, however, for the tigress and her whelps did not re-appear, and Tschudi, with a thankful heart, resumed his journey.

V.

How the Book came to an End.

A WEARY DETENTION--THE SIGNAL—SNOW-BOUND—A STORY OF PRAIRIE-LIFE—RELIEVED AT LAST.

"A CAPITAL story," said Seymour, when Fisher had ended his narrative; and the other auditors expressed themselves as equally satisfied. The conversation then turned upon various subjects, coming round, naturally enough, to their unfortunate position; and Seymour found it hard work to keep up the spirits of his companions.

At length he rose, threw open the door of the railway-carriage, and gazed upon the world without. The prospect was not an enlivening one. On the bleak Yorkshire wold rested the deep shadows of winter; and night was rapidly deepening the gloom of the distant horizon. The silence was intense; not a sound was audible, save now and then the moan of the rising wind. Still and motionless, like a shroud, lay the cold white snow on the far-spreading moor-land. Whichever way you gazed, the oppressive whiteness, rendered all the more vivid by contrast with the darkling skies, forced itself on your notice. Snow lay in heavy wreaths in the hollows; covered all the rising ground;

hung upon the spectral branches of the trees. Seymour gazed, and gazed; forced to confess to himself that he had never looked upon a drearier scene. No help was in sight; not a cottage relieved the dreariness of the inhospitable waste. Brave and resolute as he was, his heart almost failed him; not for himself, but for his companions, who began to suffer from the extreme cold. In truth, to spend the night in a lonely railway-carriage, without fire, light, or proper food, was no very pleasant prospect. As the snow had continued to fall heavily, it now lay so thickly in the railway-cutting that Seymour was apprehensive whether a relief-train could force its way to their assistance. He knew, however, that upon him and Fisher devolved the duty of keeping up the spirits of their younger comrades; and he drew back into the carriage with as cheerful a countenance as he could assume.

The long detention and the increasing cold had begun to tell upon the boys. None of them showed any willingness to continue the recital of the stirring stories with which they had hitherto beguiled the hours. They were weary waiting for the relief that did not come, and were no longer sustained by the excitement of the novelty of their position. It may be doubted, indeed, whether adventures are ever so agreeable to their heroes as to those who read of them in peaceful leisure! It was past seven o'clock, and the boys had been literally imprisoned in their lonely carriage since two; in a lonely carriage, on a snow-covered Yorkshire moor, and apparently at a considerable distance from any human habitation. How they would have welcomed even the sternest usher who had made their lives miserable by "impositions" on summer half-holidays! How thankful they would have been to see the rubicund face of Dr. Birch's housekeeper, though between her and the boys a

kind of chronic feud existed! The night-air was very keen; from want of motion their limbs had become quite stiff; and they had begun to think of the warm schoolroom at Firbank as of an Elysium on earth.

It is needless to say that Fisher as well as Seymour had come to regard their position as very painful. To walk even to the nearest village, wherever that might be, was utterly impossible; the attempt could end only in disaster; and they had no means of communicating their mishaps to their friends. It was tolerably certain that sooner or later the railway officials would discover the accident, and hasten to their relief; but, meanwhile, what was to be done? Boyish appetites are sharp; and though each lad had a store of comestibles in his school-chest, unfortunately the cakes and tarts and buns provided by generous mothers were not available; the school-chests having been stowed away in the luggage-van, which, placed next to the tender, had long ago arrived at Firbank. But there was no immediate fear of famine! A more pressing evil was the severe cold, which no amount of railway rugs seemed able to keep out. Schoolboys, as everybody knows, are in the habit of involving themselves in perplexing predicaments; but we submit that never were a party of decently-disposed lads more awkwardly situated, never had they better reason for being dissatisfied with Black Monday, than Dr. Birch's "young gentlemen," thus "snow-bound" on the lonely little railway between Elmwood and Firbank!

"This will never do!" suddenly exclaimed Douglas.

His loud exclamation surprised his companions, and he hastened to explain himself.

"Why, *mei amici*, look here. It is pitch dark, or would be, but for the reflection of the snow. A down-train from Firbank will be due in thirty or forty minutes; and I

should like to know how we are to prevent the engine-driver from smashing in upon us, just as that express train, a few weeks ago, drove into a lot of coal-trucks and shivered them into splinters! We shall be done for, I take it!"

"Not a bit of it," said the Fat Boy, with a surprising degree of composure.

"What do you know about it, young adipose?" answered Douglas contemptuously.

"I know this," said the Fat Boy, with exemplary calmness; "I was walking up and down the Elmwood platform, eating one of those nice raspberry puffs they sell in the refreshment-room there — oh my! what a lot of jam it had!"—

"Go on, greedy!" said the impatient and not too courteous Douglas.

"Well, I noticed that our carriage was the very last of the train."

"What has that to do with it, stupid?"

"Stupid? Well, you might be a little more polite. But did I not observe that a great red monster of a lamp was hung up behind our carriage? Bless me, you could see it a mile off!"

Douglas opened the door and looked out; and in a minute assured himself that Lambert was not mistaken. "There *was* the lamp," he said, "and, notwithstanding the snow-storm, the driver of an advancing train could not fail to see it at a good distance off."

This information was very acceptable; but Vernon soon damped the spirits of Douglas and the Fat Boy by remarking that, at all events, in *front* of the carriage was no such protection; and how were they to guard against a collision with any engine that might be sent in search of them?

The boys looked upon this as a poser; and Douglas

innocently suggested that the best plan would be for all of them to quit the carriage, and sit down under the bank! Then, as soon as they heard an approaching train, they could give notice of their whereabouts by a tremendous shout.

They could not help reflecting, however, that in half an hour they would be frozen into statues, and that those who came in search of them would have nothing to do but arrange for their interment! While young Lambert heroically declared that rather than sit in the cold night-air and amid the snow, he would stick to the carriage, and risk all the chances of a collision.

Seymour and Fisher had taken no part in this boyish discussion. They were perfectly well aware that a collision was impossible in the then loaded state of the rails. If a train got along at all, it would be only with the help of a snow-plough, and at such a moderate rate of speed that an engine-driver would have ample time to pull up before he reached them. But they were unwilling to increase the alarm of their younger companions by dwelling upon the true state of affairs; and it occurred to Seymour that, after all, it might be as well to devise some plan by which a relief-party from Firbank might have notice of their exact position.

After a moment's consideration, he opened the door, and with some difficulty climbing upon the roof of the carriage, he removed the lamp. This he proceeded to attach with his handkerchief to one of the "buffers," and had the satisfaction of finding that it gave a clear, though not a very powerful light.

He then made his way back into the carriage, which, of course, was enveloped in complete darkness. With handkerchiefs and comforters he closed up the opening in the roof through which the lamp had been inserted; and then

hastened to cheer up his younger comrades as best he could. In his waistcoat pocket he had a box of vesta-matches, or tiny wax tapers, and one of these he lighted occasionally, so as to relieve a little the oppression of the scene.

"Come, boys," he cried, "don't give way,"—for something very like a sob broke upon his ear; "cheer up, and in a few minutes we shall be relieved. 'Cheer, boys, cheer, no more of idle sorrow.' If they don't send an engine from Firbank, the down-train from Elmwood must, by this time, be making its way through the snow, and our red lamp will stop it sure enough! 'Cheer, boys, cheer!' though this is 'waiting for the waggon' in very unpleasant circumstances. Fisher, you must immortalize our adventures in an epic:—'Snow-bound; or, the Night on the Yorkshire Moor.' I wonder what Dr. Birch thinks of our non-arrival,—and good Mrs. Birch,—and the janitor, Old Tom, —and our dearly-beloved Cook! Let us try a song:—

"Cheer, boys, cheer, no more of idle sorrow,
For help, be sure, will find us here at last;
And then we'll smile and talk upon the morrow
Of all the perils we have safely passed.

"Cheer, boys, cheer, and be above repining,
Though we are fixed so fast among the snow;
While Lambert still for meat and drink is whining,
And all around the winter-breezes blow.

"Cheer, boys, cheer, no more of idle sorrow,
For help, be sure, will find us here at last;
Cheer, boys, cheer, at Firbank on to-morrow
We'll gaily talk of dangers that are past."

He rattled on in lively style until he had talked his younger companions into a cheerful mood. Then they indulged in vocal exercises, and performed several popular melodies with great success. But, after awhile, this too palled upon their jaded faculties, and Seymour found him-

self almost at his wit's end for a fresh source of amusement.

"Come, somebody," said young Lambert at this moment, "tell us another tale."

"No more natural history, though," rejoined Douglas; "I don't relish exciting tiger-hunts in the darkness; and I declare I can't look out upon the snow without fancying I see a troop of wolves hurrying upon us!"

"Our stories have taken us," remarked Beauchamp, "into the pathless forest, the dense Indian jungle, and across the rolling prairies of North America. I remember a tale which strikingly illustrates the dangers and vicissitudes of prairie-life in the early time of pioneering enterprise, though it has no connection with any of the animals whose habits we have been discussing. For this reason, perhaps, you may object to hear it."

"Not at all," said Fisher; "I think I can answer for the company generally that they will listen with pleasure."

"And," interrupted Seymour, "not without edification. Besides, variety is charming, and a good stirring narrative will keep Lambert awake."

Beauchamp then began.]

A STORY OF PRAIRIE-LIFE.*

As early as the year 1790, a party of American hunters, who had been chasing the bear over the undulating plains of the north-west, had stationed themselves for a while near the mouth of the Hockhocking River. Day after day they took their rifles and their axes, and wandered in different directions in quest of prey. Their success was considerable, and they soon gathered together a valuable pile of skins. The beauty of the surrounding scenery delighted them

* Milburn, 'The Rifle, the Axe, and the Saddle-Bag.'

hugely, and they resolved to establish themselves altogether in a place which presented so many advantages, thus planting their feet, as it were, on the frontier-line of civilization. For a while they were undisturbed by the neighbouring Indians—who, however, did not fail to regard their propinquity with a jealous eye—and no more formidable enemy tasked their energies than a brown bear, a marten, a prairie dog, or a crafty wolverine.

The course of pioneering adventure, not the less, in those days was fated to be interrupted by sudden perils. It chanced that the Indian tribes of the west and north were accustomed to hold their great councils in the fine Hockhocking valley; and on one of these occasions, when the war-spirit stirred mightily their fierce souls, and the tomahawk leaped in its belt, and the spirits of the warrior-dead came to them in the night-visions, they solemnly resolved on exterminating the 'white faces' who had dared to encroach on their hunting-grounds.

Some rumours of their design having reached the ears of our hunters, they thought it advisable to despatch two of the trustiest and most experienced of their number to watch the Indian movements, and report.

These adventurers were named White and M'Clelland; bold, hardy, resolute men, famed for their skill with the rifle, and their cool contempt of danger. On a balmy summer day they took leave of their comrades, and started on their hazardous enterprise. After some hours of rapid travelling they reached a remarkable prominence, now known as Point Pleasant, which stretches far out into the Hockhocking valley, like a ridge of rock into a narrow sea; its western termination rises abruptly from the river's edge in a perpendicular cliff, several hundred feet high, and its lofty summit, clear of wood as an Alpine peak, commands a

wide prospect over the low-lying country. From hence, as from a watch-tower, the two hunters could watch every movement of the savages. Here they took up their station, day after day, and night after night; ever on the watch, ever alert and observant; now gazing on the martial exercises and wild dances of the younger warriors, now on the grave councils of the sachems and elders. The whoops and shouts of the young men rose to their ears, subdued by the more musical laughter of the squaws and girls, or heightened by the shrill dissonant voices of the older women. The arrival of every new war-party was greeted with horrid yells, which, striking against the rocky wall of the promontory, fell back into the valley with countless echoes and reverberations, like the loud revelry of a Walpurgis-night. Such an unearthly clamour would have stricken most hearts with panic fear; in the ears of our hunters it sounded like martial music, to inspire them with redoubled vigilance, to animate them with new courage. On several occasions small bands of 'braves' quitted the Indian encampment, and ascended Point Pleasant from the eastern side. At such times the hunters secreted themselves in the deep fissures of the rocks on the west, and emerged from their hiding-places when their unwelcome visitors disappeared.

For food, meanwhile, our hunters depended on the corn-bread and jerked bear's meat with which they had taken care to store their knapsacks. They durst not kindle a fire; and to bring down any of the game which they saw around them would have ensured an immediate attack by the Indians. For drink they had the rain-water collected in some of the rocky hollows; but after awhile the supply was exhausted, and M'Clelland and White found they must either obtain a fresh stock or be driven from their enterprise by thirst. M'Clelland, as the elder, resolved upon the hazardous attempt.

Rifle in hand, and with two canteens slung across his shoulders, he descended cautiously, and by a circuitous route, to the prairie, skirting the hills on the north: under cover of the leafy hazel bushes, he gained the river, and turning a bold projecting bluff, found a beautiful well within a few feet of the bank, now known as the 'Cold Spring.' Speedily filling his canteens, he returned to his companion by the same route. They then determined to refresh themselves with a daily supply of water, and the duty of fetching it was performed alternately.

One day, after White had filled his vessels, and while he sat watching the pure bright stream which gushed so copiously from the emerald sward, the light sound of footsteps fell upon his practised ear. Turning round, he saw two Indian squaws within a few paces of his temporary seat. Almost immediately he was descried by them, and the elder squaw gave one of those peculiar far-reaching whoops peculiar to Indians. At once the hunter felt all the peril of his situation. Should the alarm reach the Indian encampment, he and his comrade were doomed to certain destruction. With innate chivalry he shrank from an attack upon two women, but the law of self-preservation overrides every scruple. Rapid to think, and prompt to act, he threw himself upon his victims, and grasping the throat of each, sprang into the river. The head of the elder he thrust under water, but the younger offered a violent resistance, and, to his intense surprise, besought him in English, though English imperfectly expressed, to spare her life. White immediately released his hold, and she proceeded to inform him that ten years before she had been taken captive by the Indians, who had slain all her family but herself and her brother. The brother, however, had contrived to effect his escape: her lot had been less fortunate. While she told her tale,

the dead body of the elder squaw floated away down the current. White and the girl started off for the mount, but had scarcely succeeded in reaching its summit before the alarm cry of the Indians rang over the plain. A hunting party returning towards the camp had discovered the dead squaw, and the Indians, convinced that the whites were close at hand, seized their weapons to avenge her death. Bands of warriors started off in all directions, and a troop of about twenty, cautiously keeping under cover, began the ascent of Mount Pleasant on the eastern side. The hunters intensely watched their swarthy foes as they glided from tree to tree, and stole from rock to rock, until their position was surrounded, except on the perpendicular side to the westward. Abandoning all hope of safety, they prepared to sell their lives dearly, while they counselled the girl to escape to the Indians, and declare she had been taken prisoner. This, however, she resolutely refused to do. She would rather die than again endure captivity. Her only regret was that her new-found countrymen could not furnish her with a rifle, for youthful practice had made her a steady shot.

The two hunters were admirably posted. From the inequalities and broken character of the rocky crest, the Indians could not discover the number of the men who held it; while, from the nature of the ground below, the savages could not advance beyond a certain line without exposing themselves to the fire of the unknown marksmen above. They therefore advanced with a slowness and a caution which less experienced adversaries might have mistaken for timidity. The hunters, on their part, only fired when their aim was sure, and had the satisfaction of knowing that not a single shot was wasted.

But while they thus gallantly kept the front, and held

their foes in check, they became aware of a new danger. It was evident that the Indians intended to attack them on the flank; which could most successfully be done by gaining an isolated rock lying in a ravine on the southern side of the hill. This rock once in possession of the Indians, they would bring the hunters under point-blank shot of their rifles without the possibility of escape. The situation seemed hopeless, for only a brave comrade and unerring marksman could avert the peril. Not the less did our adventurers, with heroic composure, continue their defence, and, while fully comprehending the deadly chances against them, endeavour to meet the new emergency.

M'Clelland saw a tall swarthy warrior preparing to spring from a covert so near to the fatal rock, that one or two leaps would accomplish the distance, and then—farewell to life! All, all depended upon one successful shot. Not more than an inch or two of the warrior's body was exposed, and that at a distance of eighty or one hundred yards, but he resolved to run the risk. Coolly raising his rifle, and shading the sights with his hand, he took sure and certain aim; he touched the trigger—down fell the hammer—but instead of striking fire, it broke the flint to pieces! He felt assured that the Indian must reach the rock before he could adjust another flint; but, nevertheless, he calmly proceeded with the task, casting his eye towards the critical point. Ah me! He saw the Indian straining every muscle for the leap; with the agility and fury of a panther he made his spring; hark, a death-cry of agony and rage—and his dark body rolls lifeless into the valley below, stricken by some unknown hand. A hundred voices re-echoed the awful wail! It was evident they had not only been baffled in an important movement, but deprived of one of their most renowned braves. His fate, however, only whetted

their blood-thirst. Another athletic savage cautiously moved towards the covert recently occupied by his companion. At the same time the attack in front was renewed with increased fury, so as to require the incessant shots of both hunters to prevent their enemies from gaining the summit. M'Clelland saw the warrior preparing for the fatal leap. It was made; and he too rolled heavily down towards the mountain depth—slain by the same mysterious agency. This second disaster seemed to appal the assailants, and, just as the sun went down in gold and purple and a thousand changing glories behind the dark western hills, they withdrew, doubtlessly to devise some new mode of attack. And very welcome was the pause to the two hunters, who had held their ground and stoutly maintained the unequal fight from nearly the middle of the day.

It was now for the first time they noticed that the girl was missing. They began to fear she had been killed in the fight, or that, in terror as to its result, she had returned to her former captors; but lo! she made her appearance from behind a crag, and with rifle in hand advanced towards them. In the thick of the fray she had seen a warrior fall, who had advanced some paces before his fellows. Creeping through the brush-wood she had contrived to secure his gun and ammunition, and then, unobserved, had made her way to a point which commanded the fatal rock. Hers was the unseen hand which had dealt death to the two warriors, the last of whom, she said, was the bravest and fiercest of the Shawnee tribe, and the leader of the company which had taken her prisoner.

As night approached, black clouds overspread the whole heavens, and the hoarse muttering of the distant thunder foretold one of those sudden and awful storms which break over the American prairies. The hunters resolved to at-

tempt their escape in the dense darkness, and the white girl offered to act as guide, a post for which she was well fitted, both through her intimate knowledge of the country, and her acquaintance with Indian habits.

They had scarcely accomplished their descent of the eastern side of Point Pleasant before they heard a low soft signal from their guide. Instantly they sank in silence on the earth, where, by previous arrangement, they lay still, waiting for a sign that they might resume their journey. Her absence for the space of fifteen to twenty minutes began to arouse their suspicions that some accident had occurred, which, however, were relieved by her return. She explained that she had contrived, by a plausible tale, to remove a couple of sentinels whom she had found posted in their route at a short distance ahead.

The march was noiselessly resumed, and while the rain fell, and the thunder rolled and rattled, the hunters followed their intrepid guide in profoundest silence for half a mile, when the barking of a dog close at hand apprised them of a new danger. The almost simultaneous click of their triggers was heard by the girl, who gave another significant signal, and whispered that they were now in the very midst of the Indian encampment, and that their lives depended on their caution and prudence. They followed her footsteps, therefore, with the utmost wariness, scarcely venturing to breathe, and almost suffocated by a terrible sense of oppression. They had gone but a few steps when their guide was accosted by a squaw who suddenly came forth from a wigwam. They, however, remained unseen. To the salutation, the girl replied briefly in the Indian language; the squaw withdrew, and the hunters pressed on. In a short time she stopped, and turning, gave them the welcome information that they had left the encampment, and had accomplished the most

dangerous part of their journey. She knew that every pass was guarded by the Indians, and, as least hazardous, had adopted the daring expedient of striking through the very centre of their camp. The result proved that the highest boldness is sometimes the greatest prudence. They now directed their course to the River Ohio, and after three days' travel arrived at their comrades' post on the Hockhocking. Their escape diverted the Indians from their contemplated attack, and the white maiden whom they had so romantically rescued proved to be the sister of the gallant Cornelius Washburn, a name now forgotten, but once renowned in the annals of Indian warfare.

["Such is my story, boys; and though it has nothing to do with bears, it has, you see, with a couple of bear-hunters."

Just as Beauchamp had concluded, and before his hearers could express their satisfaction, a loud whistle rang through the night air, keen and shrill. In a frenzy of delight the boys dashed open the carriage door, and sprang out upon the snow. The whistle was repeated.

"It comes from Firbank way," said Fisher; "boys, let us answer! Hip—hip—hurrah!"

You know, gentle reader, how school-boys *can* cheer, and you will believe that "Dr. Birch's young gentlemen" on this occasion made the best use of their lungs. They were evidently heard, for two loud whistles were given in quick succession, and then a series of those short sharp puffs in which engine-drivers apparently delight. Soon the red lamps of the advancing engine loomed largely upon them, and drew nearer and yet nearer. The boys gave another shout, another, a fourth, a fifth, and broke at length into a confused cheering, which lasted until their deliverance arrived. The engine-driver drew slowly along the line,

warned by the lamp of the position of the missing carriage. A guard who had accompanied him jumped down, and was immediately surrounded by the boys, who eagerly poured into him a volley of questions. He soon explained that an accident had happened to the engine, which had detained them upwards of an hour, and that it was with the utmost difficulty they made their way through some parts of the line, owing to the depth of the snow. Dr. Birch was in a state of great anxiety, he added, respecting their safety, but had thoughtfully provided a supply of rugs and wrappers for his unfortunate scholars.]

But why continue? Our readers will guess the *dénouement* for themselves; will imagine how Seymour and his comrades reached Firbank in safety, though late at night; how warm a reception they were accorded by Dr. and Mrs. Birch; and how, during the session, they frequently related the adventures of that memorable railway-journey, and retold the tales which had beguiled their dull imprisonment. After which they were committed to manuscript—revised, enlarged, and improved—and in this form attained a vast popularity. The boys were never weary of hearing them, and each *raconteur*, on a half-holiday, became the centre of an admiring audience. May my readers find as great a pleasure in their perusal! "Truth is strange—stranger than fiction;" and true, if strange, are these stories in which we have followed the Hunter and the Sportsman in the Forest and the Prairie.